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Editorial

Carlo Granados-Beltrán, PhD*

This new edition of GiST Journal is varied both in topics and countries. We count on articles from Turkey, Mexico and the USA, as well as Colombia. Our articles account for the diverse interest of scholars. Among them, we find the use of technology for language teaching, motivation and participation, collaborative learning, and vocabulary learning. Some of the studies reported could also serve as inspiration for researchers such as one of recent trends in MA programs in ELT, and one about a decolonial perspective of teachers' knowledge. The Editorial Team at GiST Journal hopes our readership will find both knowledge and inspiration in the articles selected for this issue.

The transition from face-to-face environments to virtual spaces forced by the pandemic by COVID – 19 has led to the exploration of how to better adjust the use of technological developments to educational needs. In this direction, the contribution by Arias-Segura explores how the use of mobile phones could both help in teaching reading skills and fostering motivation in students; likewise, **Çetin Koroğlu**, from Turkey, investigates how effective is digital formative assessment of speaking skills compared to traditional ways of assessing speaking. Both contributions lead us to new insights that can enrich the pedagogy behind the use of technology in the current times.

This edition of GiST journal also counts on some contributions about methodological aspects such as the teaching of vocabulary, students' motivation and participation, and the promotion of collaborative learning. **Tavsanli, Kaldirim**, and **Gedikli** confirmed the usefulness of music in second-graders' understanding and retention of vocabulary. A very common feature in language schools, at least in Colombia, is the reluctance of students to participate specially in an oral way. **Sánchez Hernández, Vez López**, and **García Barrios** explored this phenomenon in a language school in Veracruz, México, and found that self-esteem and the teacher's role are key factors that influence on students' participation. A widely used methodology in

language teaching is collaborative learning since it fosters students' accountability as well as healthy interactions among them. In this sense, **Carvajal Ayala** and **Avendaño-Franco**, by means of careful lesson planning, confirmed that children can work collaboratively when adequate instructions and conditions are provided.

Another recent interest, triggered by the pandemic, among other factors, is how to best integrate the development of Social Emotional Learning Skills within the field of EFL/ESL and Bilingual Teaching. **Burgin**, from the USA, investigated about the ways a group of Ecuadorian teachers worked around the direct instruction of social emotional learning and its integration in elementary school. Finally, there are two very interesting contributions related to teacher education and teachers' knowledges. **López, Ramírez**, and **Vargas** report on a study aimed at identifying tendencies in the research techniques and the curricular and pedagogical interventions MA students and alumni have developed in their corresponding programs. This exploratory study could serve as an input on how to innovate in topic selection, research methodologies, and curricular and pedagogical implementations in the language classroom. Lastly, in her article, Castañeda-Londoño advocates for a move in the understanding of the ways teachers experience knowledge, involving their emotions and bodies as well, and employing testimonials as a research technique. This is an enriching contribution to the decolonial shift in ELT promoted by different scholars in Colombia.

We encourage ELT scholars in Colombia and abroad to continue strengthening this community of knowledge by sharing their research and reflections through publication.

Dr. Carlo Granados-Beltrán
Academic Vice Chancellor
ÚNICA

The Role of Mobile Phones in Developing Motivation through Reading Activities in English Language Learners¹

El papel de los teléfonos móviles en el desarrollo de la motivación a través de actividades de lectura en aprendices de inglés.

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Abstract

This case study attempts to elucidate the effects of mobile phones as tools for teaching reading in fostering motivation in EFL students. Through qualitative research techniques, the researcher analyses the impact that the implementation of a set of activities in a reading techniques course has on second-year English language learners' motivation. Focus groups and questionnaires help gather the students' perceptions of their involvement, enjoyment, and investment; the atmosphere created during the implementation of the activities, and their overall experience. In conclusion, the ubiquity of cell phones provides advantages in the development of motivation towards learning English and in fostering independence.

Keywords: technology, mobile phones, motivation, reading activities, EFL

Resumen

Este estudio de caso intenta dilucidar los efectos de los teléfonos móviles como herramientas para la enseñanza de la lectura en fomentar la motivación en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Mediante el uso de técnicas de investigación cualitativa, el investigador analiza los efectos que tiene la implementación de un conjunto de actividades en un curso de técnicas de lectura sobre la motivación de los estudiantes de segundo año de inglés. Grupos focales y cuestionarios ayudan a reunir las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre su participación, disfrute e interés; el ambiente creado durante la implementación de las actividades y su experiencia en general. En conclusión, la ubicuidad de los teléfonos celulares proporciona ventajas en el desarrollo de la motivación para aprender inglés y para fomentar la independencia.

Palabras clave: tecnología, teléfonos móviles, motivación, actividades de lectura, EFL

Resumo

Este estudo de caso tenta dilucidar os efeitos que tem o uso dos telefones celulares como ferramentas para ensinar leitura para fomentar a motivação nos estudantes de EFL. Através do uso de técnicas qualitativas de pesquisa, o professor implementa um conjunto de atividades em um curso de técnicas de leitura para estudantes de inglês de segundo ano; grupos focais e questionários ajudam a reunir as percepções dos estudantes sobre a sua participação, disfrute e interesse; o ambiente criado durante a implementação das atividades e a sua experiência em geral. Em conclusão, a onipresença dos telefones celulares proporciona vantagens no desenvolvimento da motivação para aprender inglês e para fomentar a independência.

Palavras chave: tecnologia, telefones celulares, motivação, atividades de leitura, EFL

Introduction

Language teaching and learning is undergoing rapid changes, especially with the introduction of modern technology in pedagogy. Although the changes have occurred gradually, teachers have encountered challenges concerning accessibility and availability of resources and materials. One resource that has gained popularity are cell phones; it has eased common issues pertaining to the handiness of electronic devices. They are personal resources that can be used as part of the pedagogical mediation while promoting motivation. Hereof, students face various challenges when learning a foreign language; motivation has been noted to be essential when developing language proficiency. Ortega (2013) expressed that motivation is “the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it, and in lay terms we all understand it to be a matter of quantity (p.168). Motivation is an abstract construct that involves four aspects: “a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitudes toward the activity in question” (Gardner, 1985, as cited in Gass and Selinker, 2009, p. 426). Although students mainly develop motivation by themselves, teachers can promote tools, activities, and resources to motivate students in their classes. In this sense, technology may encourage learning by enhancing participation and engagement in classroom activities.

By using technology, educators can help students feel more comfortable while learning. By integrating cell phones, which has now become a part of daily life, it can also be essential in carrying out everyday tasks to develop a sense of pertinence. This study may make a significant contribution to the body of existing research by contextualizing the study to the Costa Rican higher education system, motivating other professors to leave behind concerns about the use of cell phones in the classroom, and by innovating to promote the students’ learning and boost their linguistic competence.

Purpose

This research aims to analyze the effects of cell phone-based reading activities on fostering motivation in second-year English teaching students at the Universidad Nacional, Brunca Extension. The study involves designing and implementing reading activities that include using cell phones as a critical element to facilitate learning. Also, the researcher gathers students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the given activities in enhancing motivation. Finally, a crucial purpose is to reflect on the impact that cell phone-based activities have in promoting motivation.

Research Questions

This research project aims to answer the following questions about the use of mobile technology in developing motivation in EFL students by implementing reading activities: What is the role of technology in an English language student's learning process? How can cell phone use as a learning tool help students feel motivated during reading activities? Why should language teachers include cell phone use in their reading activities?

Literature Review

ESL teaching and technology

Classroom technology integration brings many advantages when used purposefully by instructors. The modern student needs to prepare for an interconnected world, where technology is vital to achieving everyday tasks. "Social, political and economic changes are coming together with pedagogic changes at a breathtaking pace (Kress & Pachler, 2007, p.7). In English language teaching and learning, technology has aided these processes by enabling access to materials and facilitating their use in education. The following summary presents a set of reasons for how technology can become the backbone of the integration of technology in the classroom, as presented by Hamilton (2015). First, classroom technology has two models: its instructional function, where teachers use it during whole-class or small-group interactions. A second model denotes the demonstration mode of technology; in this case, students control its use while teachers lead them. Another principal pivots around how learners acquire knowledge when they partake in learning, by discovering ideas, activating their schemata, and, most importantly, forming ways to share knowledge with peers (pp. 4-5). The type of technology integration used in the language classroom will be determined by the instructor, and the purpose that technology will be given in it. Another aspect that can

shape how technology is employed is related to the types of technology available to the students.

Mobile technology and teaching reading

Reading is a crucial skill to develop in students in EFL instruction; it allows for exposure to authentic language while learners interact with new vocabulary, grammar structures, and mechanics. Reading requires active interaction between the reader and the text; its acquisition is imperative in developing language literacy; it is a dynamic and interactive process that allows the use of various skills, strategies, and background knowledge (Constantinescu, 2007, para. 3). Teaching reading strategies in English language classrooms is challenging; it is time-consuming and promotes engagement and motivation may be difficult. Innovative measures need to be applied in the classroom to productive learning engagement to improve the range and depth of processing, which can be unavailable to students in classrooms without technology use (Nettelbeck, 2005, p.31). In this sense, active interaction between the reader and the text may be achieved through innovation. Adding technology to the reading process can aid readers' engagement and promote learning.

In contrast, there are challenges to overcome when integrating cell phones in reading teaching and learning. "One such challenge, for example, surrounds the physicality of the devices: due to their small size, the amount of data that can be displayed at any one time and the ease with which it can be manipulated is limited" (Kress & Pachler, 2007, p.12). Because cell phones are usually smaller devices, display capabilities and storage can be compromised, compared to tablets and laptop computers; such limitations need to be borne in mind when using mobiles as reading devices.

Promoting motivation with technology in language teaching

Besides the multiple benefits that technology provides in language teaching, technology's role in enhancing motivation is also worth examining. Ortega (2013) presented a comparison of three main dimensions of motivation; first, intensity refers to the effort with which people try to learn the language; enjoyment indicates the learner's feeling of pleasure while learning, and finally, investment denotes the desire in succeeding in learning the language (pp. 170-171). How students and teachers exercise these dimensions can bring profound differences in the results of language learning. When it comes to motivation in reading, improving students' engagement is considered a factor concerning developing reading performance and thus of language proficiency. In this sense, Anderson (2014) stressed that engaged readers are motivated;

and for them to be motivated, there needs to be a teacher responsible for generating such engagements (pp.173-174). Teachers should go beyond the curriculum and think about the students' development and language attainment to develop motivation. For instance, allowing learners to make their own reading selections can make a difference in terms of engagement and enjoyment. Thus, the teacher should adapt the curriculum to the students' choices and find other ways to foster motivation.

Technology can promote motivation in the process of learning a language; it is a tool that increases students' learning by "providing them with realistic and motivating opportunities to practice their English" (Dudeney & Hockly, 2008, p. 12). Concerning the use of the students' mobile devices in language teaching, they "can provide immediate feedback and thus provide continued motivation for those who are not motivated by traditional educational settings" (Geddes, 2004, as cited in Valk et al., 2010, p. 121). These advantages should be exploited in all linguistic skills. Hence, "technology growth is likely to make greater, rather than lesser, demands on people's reading abilities" (Grabe & Stoller, 2013, p. xiv): and such demands may imply the development of engaged readers. From this perspective, English instructors ought to promote reading through technology; cell phones stimulate motivation by allowing learners to participate in less traditional reading activities. Moreover, teachers can motivate students in reading classes by integrating common mobile platforms such as social media and mobile applications.

There could be drawbacks related to using mobile devices in reading activities; the size of the phone and software limitations may reduce the applicability of the technology in the language classroom setting. Besides such technical difficulties, "Excessive cell phone use during class often leads students to engage in academic disengagement" (Lee et al., 2017, p. 360). Learners start multitasking by checking social media accounts and text messaging. Despite these potential distractions, "Mobile computing devices and the use of social media allow student interaction with content" (Gikas & Grant, 2013, p. 25). When reading activities are the primary concern, cell phones can be a resource for students and an ally for professors, who should use mobile devices purposefully while providing precise directions to students and sufficient supervision.

Design and Method

This case study includes and systematizes teaching and learning experiences in an EFL context in Costa Rica and is grounded in a qualitative research methodology that employs an "open inquiry" view. It aims to provide detailed descriptions and interpretations of a phenomenon. It also allows for a cyclical analysis and provides an emic and etic perspective to present various viewpoints (Friedman, 2012, pp. 181-182). The participants were 15 second-year English language students from the Universidad

Nacional, Brunca Extension, Pérez Zeledón Campus. The researcher also served as a practitioner-scholar, which is defined as “an individual who aspires to study problems of practice more comprehensively and systematically, allowing them to better understand the schools, districts, and other educational organizations within which they work” (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Moreover, the data collection instruments and tools were an open-ended questionnaire and two focus group discussions administered to the students after a set of seven cell phone-based reading activities were implemented once a week for two months. Additionally, a reflective observation questionnaire gathered the professor’s perceptions after each implementation activity.

First, cell phone-based activities were grounded on the idea that mobile technology can help English language students learn (Dudeney & Hockly, 2008) by providing enjoyment (Ortega, 2013). These activities were heavily reliant on technology and positioned cell phones as the main instrument to access different platforms and applications. Moreover, the open-ended questionnaire focused on discovering the duration in which students use their mobile devices in the classroom, in which could lead to the understanding of the role that mobile devices actually play in their learning. Additionally, this instrument aimed to collect the students’ perceptions at the end of the application of cell phone-based reading activities. In general, this questionnaire intended to gather data to assess cell phones’ effectiveness as a learning tool and as motivators during reading activities.

Furthermore, this study utilized two focus groups to gather in-depth insights from students regarding the role of cell phone-based reading activities in developing motivation. These focus groups served as a follow-up instrument to the questionnaire; they allowed the researcher to access the students’ perceptions in a less restricted environment. It also encouraged learners to inquire about aspects that were not clearly stated in their previous answers, or encouraging learners how to develop questions, make observations and judgements about important aspects of the questionnaire. Finally, the practitioner-scholar completed a reflective observation questionnaire designed to gather the instructor’s perceptions of the role of cell phone-based activities in developing motivation during and after the implementation of the activities.

Findings

This section of the paper summarizes the results of the application of three instruments to gather information about the effectiveness of mobile technology in developing motivation in English language students.

In the questionnaire and focus groups, most of the students considered that technology, especially mobile technology, can help them learn English; they expressed that they use different applications and websites. When asked if they felt motivated to

participate in cell phone-based classroom activities, the learners stated that they feel very motivated because they can use their mobile devices, which was and continue to be prohibited in most classes. Also, the attractiveness and newness of the activities motivated them to participate and complete the exercises. Some students stressed the importance of using a tool for learning that is personal and that they can have available all the time. Besides, the fact that some of the activities added a competitive element seemed to be a significant factor in promoting motivation. The activities considered to be the most interesting were Kahoot games, QR code treasure hunts, and online quizzes; the reasons were varied; some talked about the competitiveness and colorfulness of Kahoot while others expressed the importance of reviewing material and receiving instant feedback. Cell phones for academic purposes in class seem to be a useful tool for these students. The ubiquity of cell phones and the excitement that competitive and attractive activities brought to the learning environment helped learners interact with content, practice reading, and use their mobile devices.

In terms of the students' perceptions of possible drawbacks brought by using cell phones in the classroom, they mention that social networks are distracting, but when using their mobile devices for learning, they forget about some distractions because they are using their devices for other purposes. Also, a vast majority of students agreed that a critical disadvantage does not lie in the mobile device itself, but the access to the Internet. According to the subjects, the campus has erratic and unreliable Internet service, which can be an obstacle when using the cell phone in class. Some students also remarked that it is difficult for professors to monitor students' actual academic use of their device during activities.

The practitioner-scholar assessed the students' reaction toward the implementation of cell phone-based reading activities; the investigator reported significant acceptance of mobile technology in the activities. The students reacted positively to the instructions and seemed willing to utilize their devices in class. During the activities, students did make effort to participate in them, and they fully cooperated when they had to complete the tasks. Moreover, there was a feeling of enjoyment, and the students asked many times if they could continue with a similar task. Concerning investment to succeed, there was a high level of desire to complete the activity and to improve their overall results.

Discussion

This section seeks to validate the research findings by comparing the data obtained to the existing theory. First, during the development of the reading activities, the professor and students engaged in what Hamilton (2015) called the "second model" of classroom technology. The teacher becomes a model and helps students to use and be

in control of technology for learning. Hamilton (2015) also remarked that technology is essential due to the partaking properties it has. In this sense, students expressed that the mere fact that they were allowed to use their cell phones in class was an element that promoted learning. In many cases, technology in the classroom has been teacher controlled and handing students some of that control may help the learners to discover ideas and activate their schemata, as stated by Hamilton (2015).

Constantinescu (2007) expressed that reading is an active and interactive process that allows the use of several skills, strategies, and background knowledge. In this respect, cell phone-based reading activities promoted learning and allowed learners to engage with other linguistic skills. Additionally, students were able to complete and partake in problem-solving, and an element that helped students was the possibility to receive instant feedback in many activities, as supported by Valk et al. (2010). Such property of technology helped students to clarify knowledge and verify previously learned material. Thus, besides promoting motivation, technology provided a sense of novelty of how students accessed and interacted with reading materials. This finding connects with Nettelbeck (2005) who claimed that innovative measures need to be applied in the classroom to produce learning engagement to improve the range and depth of processing, which is unavailable to students in classrooms without technology use.

Kress & Pachler (2007) exposed some challenges that technology may present when brought into the classroom. They highlighted some physical aspects of the devices, such as size and the amount of data that can be displayed and manipulated. Nonetheless, the students did not find such elements as challenges and focused mostly on the problems they have connecting to the Internet and agreed on the fact that social media can be tenting and keep them off task. Some physical characteristics of cell phones may have been surpassed today, allowing students to use their mobile devices just like a computer. However, new challenges may have arisen in terms of social media's obliquity and their notification in real-time.

Ortega (2013) related motivation to the intensity with which people want to learn, enjoyment or pleasure while learning, and their investment or desire to succeed. In this regard, the reading activities seem to have helped the learners mostly with the second aspect: enjoyment. The professor could verify that the students' engagement in the activities and their affinity with most of them. Technology seems to have had a central role in bringing enjoyment to the classroom; the reading activities prepared by the professor were designed around the use of different technologies. This fact supports Anderson's (2014) view of teachers' responsibility to promote engagement and motivation in the classroom.

Dudeney and Hockly (2008) asserted that technology affects language learning and motivation, and Grabe and Stoller (2013) contended that technology would require students to fulfill modern reading demands. In this sense, the set of reading activities

seem to have helped learners to be exposed to the current reading requirements. The students could use their mobile devices to read and complete tasks; such activity is performed by English language readers every day as many favor electronic reading material and to complete everyday tasks on their cell phones. Thus, the reading activities allowed the learners to feel more engaged and motivated during the tasks. They could use their cell phones and other different technologies individually or with peers to learn, instead of using printed materials, which has been the norm in most reading courses.

Conclusions

The data obtained in this study has yielded information about the role of technology in the English language learning process in this particular group of learners. The students who participated in the focus groups and interviews established technology as a critical tool for learning. The diverse use of apps and websites and the easiness with which they access data and authentic materials place technology in the center of their exposure to the language. All the students acknowledged its importance and its many advantages. The use of mobile devices has gained popularity among teachers and students; in this specific study, most students considered its use to be advantageous in terms of portability, accessibility, and engagement.

Nonetheless, teachers must be cautious not to overuse this technology and plan carefully and accordingly, by developing clear objectives and maximizing its use. Besides, the use of cell phones enhances motivation in classes, increases student investment in the activities and learners showed a high level of effort, which boosted their reading skills. All the students also expressed that they enjoyed cell phone-based activities; there were positive feelings involved, which promoted learning and helped lower anxiety levels. According to the data collected, reading activities that integrate cell phones are engaging and add variety. Some informants remarked how the use of their mobile devices promoted diversity, which was refreshing and broke the monotony of using paper materials in their class.

The integration of mobile technologies into English teaching is an on-going process, yet there are many challenges to overcome. On a reflective note, the use of cell phones in the language classrooms may have many limitations, as experienced during the application of the reading activities. First, even when all the students who participated in the study had a smartphone, some of these devices showed limitations when accessing certain websites. For example, having reliable, high-speed internet service in different educational institutions in the country is very important. As per the changes required, there must be a shift in the way students and teachers view cell phones in classrooms. Some students claimed that they are still hesitant when using

their devices since they have been accustomed not to use them in class. Professors need to be aware of the advantages that mobile technology can provide, especially in language classes in foreign contexts. Access to authentic materials, the variety of activities, and engaging dynamics are just some of the positive effects of mobile phones' inclusion in the teaching and learning environment. As new technologies emerge, new ways for improving reading may emerge; however, cell phones may be an essential device to exploit in English reading classrooms for many years to come. Nonetheless, English teachers need to be updated to explore new ways to reach the demands of learners who may need technology to develop their reading skills fully.

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An exploratory study of recent trends in ELT Master's programs: Insights from stakeholders¹

Un Estudio Exploratorio de las recientes
tendencias en el Programa de Maestría
de Enseñanza de Inglés

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Abstract

This article reports on a mixed-methods research study in five English Language Teaching Master's programs in Colombia. The purpose was to identify trends in research techniques, curricular and pedagogical interventions that MA candidates and alumni dealt with in their theses. This study identified prevalent research methods, techniques, and instruments. The data collection methods included documentary analysis, four focus groups with students, four informal talks with the faculty, four interviews with the coordinators of the programs, and surveys with graduate students, professors, thesis advisors and administrators of these programs. Results suggest preference for action research on issues of language skills, curriculum design, cognitive and affective factors. Pedagogical innovations dealt with ICT, ELT methods, and language learning strategies. Another result indicates that program participants considered the master's programs as the most enriching professional development opportunity they have had. This study makes a call to local and national governments to continue funding continued graduate education and to make it a policy independent of partisan agendas.

Keywords: English language teaching, research, masters, Teacher qualification, professional training.

Resumen

Este artículo reporta un estudio de métodos mixtos en cinco programas de maestría en enseñanza del inglés en Colombia. El propósito del proyecto fue identificar tendencias en los métodos de investigación y en las estrategias de intervención que los candidatos y exalumnos de programas de maestría abordaron en sus proyectos de investigación. Este estudio identificó los métodos, técnicas e instrumentos de investigación prevalentes. Los métodos de recolección de datos incluyeron análisis documental, grupos focales, charlas informales, entrevistas y encuestas a estudiantes, profesores, asesores de tesis y administradores de estos programas. Los resultados indican que en la mayoría de los programas el objeto de estudio elegido por el cuerpo estudiantil de MA tiene que ver con las habilidades de lenguaje, la motivación y el diseño curricular. Los resultados sugieren que los programas aplican la investigación cualitativa, especialmente la investigación-acción. El estudio también encontró que estos se concentraban en preguntas sobre factores afectivos, habilidades lingüísticas y desarrollo profesional. Otro resultado indicó que los estudiantes y exalumnos describieron su participación en el programa de MA como la oportunidad de desarrollo profesional más enriquecedora en su experiencia académica. Este estudio hace un llamado al gobierno local y nacional para continuar invirtiendo en educación superior continuada al nivel de postgrado para convertirla en una iniciativa educativa con independencia de presiones políticas.

Palabras clave: la enseñanza del inglés, investigación, maestrías, cualificación docente, desarrollo profesional

English Language Teaching (ELT) Master's in Colombia arose from the needs of the educational sector to respond to the demands of social and economic development. This explains why from 2000 to 2016 the number of ELT Masters increased from two to 14 (Viáfara & Largo, 2018). For these authors, "MA graduates and candidates asserted that increasing of conceptual frameworks supported different features of their practices as they gained clarity about the teaching and learning processes and re-shaped their pedagogical actions" (p. 110). Our study is an exploration of the research work done at this level to contribute to the understanding of the developments in ELT in Colombia and advocates for backing graduate programs.

The Colombian government has recognized that the country requires "to develop the capacity of its citizens to be fluent in at least one foreign language" (MEN, 2005, para. 1); moreover, the results have shown that high school and undergraduate students still present deficiencies in English language proficiency after several years of exposure to it in classrooms. Accordingly, this mixed-methods study was intended to determine what candidates and graduates have been researching about to change this situation, considering that no valid or systematic information is available about the findings and the impact of such projects in their corresponding settings. This paper reports on the research topics and designs and the most impacted areas informed by candidates and alumni from five ELT Master's programs in Colombia.

Literature review

In this section, we made three assumptions: a) MA programs represent one of the most important sources of professional development (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Truscott de Mejía, 2016; Viáfara & Largo, 2018; Buendía & Macías, 2019), b) reflection is a *sine qua non* condition in continued teacher education (Hernández, 2015; Viáfara & Largo, 2018; Nuñez & Tellez, 2015), and c) curriculum design and implementation is the materialization of teaching initiatives and skills that translate in enhanced teaching practices (Graves, 2000; Nunan, 1999).

Master's programs and professional development (PD)

When pursuing teaching education programs, different authors have suggested different types and models. De Lella (as cited in Fandiño-Parra, 2017) mentions that the different models articulate viewpoints on education, teaching, learning and teacher training while describing the strategies and interactions that affect them. He believes that these models coincide and complement each other. They include the tasks and obligations assigned to the teacher. The author refers to four models in teacher training:

(1) The Practical-artisan model which sees the teaching process as the transmission of professional knowledge throughout a process of adaptation; this model takes into consideration concepts, habits, values and practices; (2) the Academic model which includes the competencies needed to teach the subject matter focusing on the discipline itself; (3) the Technical-efficientist model that addresses teaching through speeches and practices, following an established curriculum to accomplish some objectives and to assess the students' performance; and finally, (4) the Hermeneutic-reflective model that assumes teaching in a socio-political context in which the teacher takes into account specific circumstances related to real life situations in order to reflect, analyze and transform or improve the reality.

On the other hand, Acosta et al. (as cited in Fandiño-Parra, 2017) sustains that Teacher Professional Development Programs can be placed in three basic models considering an epistemological and methodological basis; first, the positivist, behaviorist and orthodox model according to which the teacher acts as an instructor, he implements different techniques and strategies, refers to a variety of methodologies and pedagogical issues. Second, the humanist, constructivist and existentialist model that conceives the teacher a counselor that refers to different procedures, activities and tools to guide the students in their learning, taking into account their feelings and thoughts from a psychological point of view. Third, the integral and dialogic model that approaches the teaching from a psycho-pedagogical perspective to a cognitive, socio-affective, and communicative orientation in the teaching-learning process in which both teachers and students work cooperatively towards the achievement of goals.

Teacher education at the graduate level is considered one of the most important achievements in the professional development (PD) of EFL teachers around the world. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003); "PD, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role" (p. 11). This has become a concern for EFL teachers who have seen the necessity to improve and reflect on their knowledge and practices. As Pettis (1997) points out, "development of teaching competence is our professional responsibility, and we can undertake a wide range of activities in fulfillment of this obligation" (p. 70). These activities integrate principles, knowledge, and skills. Not only teachers but also the different educational entities are aware of the value of seeing English teachers as professionals. For Ur (2002), "thriving English teachers' organizations now exist in most countries, as do journals and regular seminars and conferences; professional bodies have set up courses and tests to accredit teachers" (p. 392), in other words, graduate studies have become part of the EFL culture because teachers are now more aware of their importance of preparation to respond to the needs of their schools. Nowadays, educational communities offer resources to boost English language teaching, for example, "there are courses to take, journals to read, colleagues to talk with and observe, classroom research to conduct, textbooks to review, and workshops to attend" (Crandall as cited in Pettis, 2002, p. 70).

In addition, Masters in ELT have been recognized as an important PD resource (Stapleton & Shao, 2018; Hasrati & Tavakoli, 2014; Folse & Brummett, 2006). This is also highlighted by Truscott de Mejía (2016), who examined teacher education for EFL teachers in bilingual contexts in Colombia and discussed how PD is a way to empower teachers to face their classroom challenges. Her article cites a case study by Guzmán et al. (as cited in De Mejía, 2016), with four teachers in two cities in Colombia and found that Master's programs develop empowering attitudes among teachers who become more aware of the contributions they can make in their settings through their initiative of sharing teaching experiences, materials or activities for their lessons, along with their interest in curriculum issues that they can intervene or change to meet the needs and expectations of their students and fellow teachers. On this subject, Truscott de Mejía describes these attitudes as "commitment, enthusiasm, reflection and respect for students and colleagues" (p. 27).

PD in Colombia is also discussed by Buendía and Macías (2019) who conducted a literature review on 25 empirical studies with in-service teachers. PD was characterized keeping in mind that their definition of the term comprised "all types of professional learning undertaken by in-service English language teachers beyond the point of initial formal teacher preparation" (p. 90). The study revealed that PD focused on "language proficiency, research skills and reflective practice, teachers' beliefs and identities, an integrated approach to teacher professional development, pedagogical skills, teaching approaches, and emerging technologies" (p. 91). This means that various areas in EFL teaching have been addressed; the authors concluded that PD has evolved to more critical models "in which basic aspects such as the design criteria for PD programs, teachers' roles, and teachers' ways of learning, have been redefined" (p. 99). They tend to recommend a bottom-up approach in planning and implementing a PD program to integrate teachers' needs, styles, and expectations. This perspective is consistent with Giraldo (2014) who identified three main areas impacted by PD: teachers' performance, teachers' awareness of their own teaching and classroom performance, and positive view of PD as a reason for improvement. Along these lines, Cuesta et al. (2019) conducted a study with 23 EFL teachers enrolled in an ELT Master's program to explore the teaching practices. These authors point how PD has "evolved from being merely involved in courses or programs provided by experts with no further or systematic follow-up, reflection, and intervention phases, to being provided within the teachers' own educational contexts" (p. 43), that is, PD started to take into account teachers' reality in its design and implementation and recognized a more active role in the attempt to change practices with more informed strategies.

The role of reflection in teachers' practice

Reflection, as part of the skills teachers need to develop in their practice, has arisen as an important aspect in teacher education research (Cuesta et al., 2019; Hernández,

2015). A recent survey by Viáfara and Largo (2018) with 80 MA candidates and graduates from five universities collected their perceptions on the impact of such experience on their teaching. Findings suggested that the master's significantly contributed to the improvement of teaching, attributable to reflection processes while in action, which led to a better understanding of their settings, innovation in the lesson design, and acquisition of research skills. They identified limitations due to the lack of time, space, resources, and support from administrators or co-workers. These authors suggest that programs "need to create and strengthen alliances with the participants' working institutions" because "these associations can become avenues to bridge gaps between traditional and innovative plans and practices in both scenarios" (p. 116). The researchers also concluded that there is a need for the expansion of the programs' curricula "to go beyond teaching strategies and related research to include more issues regarding language education policy and program administration" (p. 117).

By the same token, Macias (2018) discusses the importance of reflection in ELT highlighting the fact that most teacher-education initiatives in several countries, focus either on disciplinary knowledge, or its pedagogical and methodological principles or on reflective research skills without "integrating all these aspects in their schemes for teachers' training and professional development" (p. 163). Therefore, there should be a balance "in order to provide teachers with opportunities for the training of discrete teaching classroom skills together with chances to develop high inference, reflective and reasoning skills derived from theoretical foundations and teachers' experiences" (p. 167). The balance helps teachers play a more active role with informed professional performance in teaching, supervision, mentoring, administration, and policy-making.

Regarding reflection in teacher education programs, Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (as cited in Rideout & Koot, 2009) describe some principles that can be taken into account in order to promote reflection in the pre and in-service teachers; they are meaningful collaboration, supporting learning and teaching communities, the presence of cohort groups to support the teaching practice, and writing tasks and research. These principles help improve the teaching and learning practices by forming teaching communities which facilitate professional growth because by doing writing tasks and by conducting research, teachers develop self-reflection and therefore enhance their teaching practices.

Calderhead and Gates (as cited in Fandiño-Parra, 2011) highlight the importance of reflection in teacher education indicating that it involves teachers' values, attitudes, beliefs, and cognitive skills that are concretized in the building of knowledge represented in vocabulary to report and record the teaching practice, on the basis of theoretical foundations that are connected to experience and context. The same authors recommend varied actions to foster reflection in teaching education programs, for example, promoting analytical approaches towards teaching and learning, encouraging teachers to take responsibility and be autonomous in their own practice, enhancing educational theories, and developing principled basis for classwork.

The Role of Curriculum Design

As part of curriculum design and implementation, language teaching comprises different approaches that define the teaching practice; Barahona (2014) theorizes three main models: First, the craft model that sees teaching as doing and learning by imitating the teacher, that is, knowledge is acquired as a result of observation, instruction and practice; second, the applied science model in which teaching is carried out by thinking and doing and the learning to teach is the application of the theory learnt; finally, the reflective model that conceives teaching as knowing what do, so teachers learn to teach by reflecting on their own practice. Moreover, Barahona states that “EFL contexts seem to use more integrative models in which different types of knowledge is integrated through the curriculum” (p. 48); the author specifically refers to models intended to integrate theory and practice and transform teachers intellectually because these models promote reflection, social change, strategic thinking, and exploratory research.

Schools have implemented curriculum innovations which master's program graduates need to be aware of. Curriculum design has progressed and since needs vary, “when you design a course, you design it for a specific group of people, in a specific setting, for a specific amount of time; in short, for a specific context” (Graves, 2000, p.15). The same author claims that since there are several models of curriculum, designing courses must assume objectives based on the following aspects: defining content, people's needs, physical environment, nature of course and institution, time, and teaching tools. Likewise, contexts have a variety of features that allow teachers to start at any point and to reflect on the fact that there is no sequence in their accomplishment. This claim aligns with Nunan (1994) who states that curriculum development is cyclical and interactive for it begins with any element and changes through its development, depending on the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, their contexts, their proficiency level, their teaching-learning conditions, and most importantly, the communication purposes to be promoted.

An example of curriculum design and implementation in Colombia is the one proposed by the Ministry of Education (MEN, 2005, 2016b and 2016c) whose purpose is to set guidelines and standards to make citizens more competitive in the globalized world (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016). To operationalize the theory behind this curricular project, MEN (2006) define the term bilingualism as “the different degrees of fluency with which an individual is able to communicate in more than one language and culture. These degrees depend on the context with which each person copes” (p.5). However, this definition has been challenged because English is not necessarily “the only language that might open the doorway to success and economic empowerment” (Fandiño-Parra et al. as cited in Bonilla & Tejada, 2016, p. 189). Moreover, Valdés and Figueroa (1994) define bilingualism as “the condition of ‘knowing’ two languages rather than one. [...] A strict interpretation of the expression would require that one

view of bilingualism as a condition in which there are two 'native' language systems in one individual" (p. 7); this implies that being bilingual makes a person function as a native speaker in both languages. The authors clarify that the knowing condition implies the presence of two languages no matter the degree of knowledge and also define bilingualism as "a common human condition in which an individual possesses more than one language competence" (p. 8). Gass and Selinker (2008) ratify this perspective and define as bilingual a person "whose language is in a steady state and who has learned and now knows two languages" (p. 25). The notions of bilingualism and curriculum design are and should continue being, problematized in teacher education as well as in the schools themselves.

Methodology

The purpose of our study was to identify and describe trends in the research processes of five master's programs in Colombia. To accomplish this goal, a mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2009) helped us collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compare the data to determine if there is convergence, differences, or some combination. We engaged in data collection and analysis that intertwined qualitative and quantitative data to understand the issues addressed "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Morse as cited in Creswell & Plano, 2018, p. 68).

The participants were 28 professors, 79 students, 31 graduates, 12 advisors, and 5 administrators from five Master's in Colombia located in Barranquilla, Bogotá, and Manizales. They belonged to four universities, two private (Barranquilla and Bogotá) and two public (Bogotá and Manizales). They were chosen on a convenience sampling basis (Cozby, 2008) considering the following criteria: 1) Be available and have the consent of the program administration; 2) Be older than five years with the expectation of having already graduated more than one cohort and have on-going research projects; 3) the program was delivered fully in English; 4) Emphasize ELT in the curriculum, and 5) include a research component in the curricula. The participating programs are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Master's programs participating in the research study

Master's program	Universities	Cities
Master's in English Language Teaching- Autonomous Learning Environments	University 1	Bogota
Master's in English Language Teaching for Self-Directed Learning (online)	University 1	Bogota
Master's in Applied Linguistics to English Language Teaching	University 2	Bogota
Master's of English Language Teaching	University 3	Barranquilla
Master's in English Didactics	University 4	Manizales

The participating universities focused on EFL teaching with a research orientation. The first university in Bogotá offers an MA in ELT emphasizing Autonomous Learning Environments and an M.A. in ELT emphasizing self-directed learning. The first program promotes reflection in practice and autonomous learning environments and is given on an on-site basis; it also offers an ICALT certificate issued by the University of Cambridge. The other is online in agreement with a U.S. university and shares the same principles concerning autonomy and reflective teaching with an additional graduate diploma in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). The second university in Bogotá offers an MA in applied linguistics to the teaching of English that proposes theories and methodologies to design curricula and materials to respond to the EFL teaching and learning needs in schools and universities. It also involves in-service language teachers in professional development and assists the Ministry of Education in policy-making decisions and adjustments. The third university in Barranquilla offers an MA in ELT whose objective is to instruct teachers in the research field to solve teaching-learning problems of their contexts. It follows a blended learning approach. The fourth university, in Manizales offers an MA in English didactics emphasizing critical and reflective pedagogy.

The data collection included documentary analysis with demographic (location, population, age, gender) and curriculum information of each program which was collected via the internet in the websites of the programs and complemented with interviews with administrators; the researchers carried out focus groups and informal talks with professors, research tutors, students and graduates to capture their views on their research experience; these focus groups were conducted in situ through face to face meetings arranged by the administrators according to the profile of the participants. All the participant master students and alumni took a survey (Appendix 1) about their research problems, data collection techniques, strategies of intervention,

research method, and their perceptions about the impact of their research projects on their settings and personal or professional life. In interviews (Appendix 2), five administrators gave their perceptions of the research component of their programs and its impact on their contexts.

The information was analyzed on a grounded approach (Freeman, 2001) basis with inter-rater reliability procedures and data triangulation (Creswell, 2009). Since surveys were completed both online (Quia©) and pencil and paper, the researchers decided to upload all the survey answers to the Quia platform; for the other data collection techniques, audio-recordings were transcribed and protocols were completed while interacting with the participants. Once all the information was systematized, the three researchers coded independently the data from the surveys, the focus groups, the informal talks, and the interviews; then, as part of the triangulation process, raters agreed on the final codes that were identified in the three different views explored in the data collection (students and alumni, professors and research advisors, and administrators).

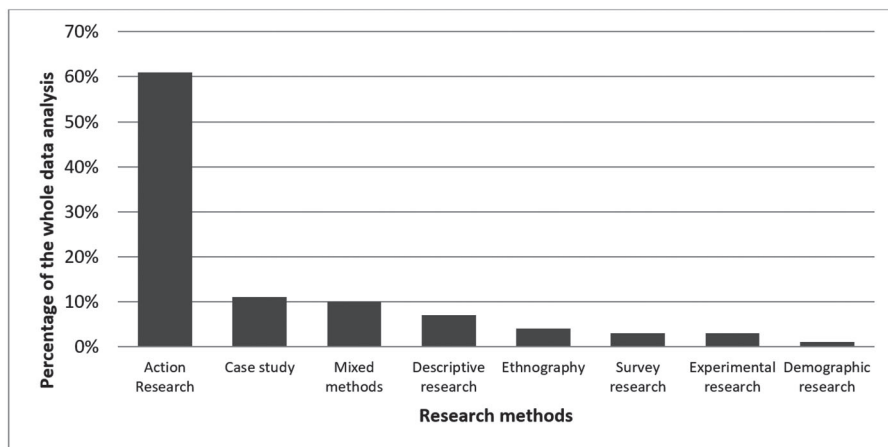
Results and discussion

This section discusses the general findings obtained from the analysis that answered the following research questions: What type of research techniques, curricular and pedagogical interventions have been implemented in five master's programs (MP) in Colombia? What are the main areas of reflection and intervention identified in the EFL teaching and learning processes researched by candidates in such settings? and Which are the main areas impacted by MP as professional development?

Action Research Prevailed

Consistent with the principles stated by the Master's, the most common research methods corresponded to qualitative designs, being Action Research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1984) the most used (Figure 1). The majority of the participants, especially administrators, highlighted the benefits of Action Research in terms of flexibility to adapt instrumentation and processes to settings and the reflective component that encourages teachers to self-evaluate their practice. In the second place, Case Studies (Creswell, 2009) appeared as common designs that helped participants focus on a very specific unit of research to draw conclusions about class phenomena.

Figure 1. Preferred Research Methods in Five Colombian ELT Master's Programs



Respondents highlighted their interest in following up very specific learning situations considering that in most places, large classes make research challenging. Mixed methods arose as a current trend in which teachers had the opportunity to combine qualitative and quantitative techniques and instruments to foster validity and reliability in their studies; this method seems to be a trend since respondents referred to it as a practical way to combine varied techniques and instruments to enrich data collection and analysis. Less common methods were ethnography, descriptive research, survey research, and demographic research that were referred to as large studies that require longer periods of time and larger populations.

Research work focused on the Four Skills and Motivation

As Figure 2 shows, the data analysis reported that participants' research work focused on the language skills and the learners' motivation towards the EFL learning process.

Figure 2. Foci of Research Work in Five Colombian ELT MA Programs

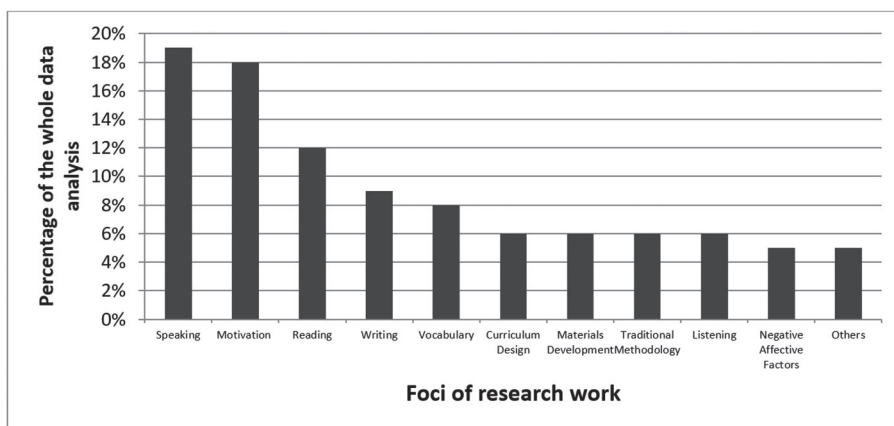


Figure 2 shows that the learning of the speaking skill among the students that participated in the research projects carried out by the Master's candidates or graduates reported to be one the most problematic areas identified in the diagnostic stage of the research projects. Furthermore, as confirmed by Romaña (2015) and Hymes (1972) who discuss the challenges that most teachers face when dealing with the speaking skill, the respondents said that this weakness was represented by the students' reluctance to interact orally in spite of the authentic and meaningful input provided by teachers. The data showed that pronunciation, stress, and fluency were the weakest aspects identified in the learners' speaking performance that prevented them from smoothly expressing themselves orally. The lack of motivation of the sample populations of the research projects conducted by the participants in this study appeared as the second most common problem in the institutional contexts intervened by candidates and graduates in these Masters. This difficulty was referred to as lack of awareness of the importance of English for academic and social development since learners' expectations do not include English as an opportunity, and they did not find it meaningful in their lives. In accordance with Dornyei (1994), this factor was also related to low self-esteem, lack of enthusiasm, and reluctance to participate in the learning process, most of the time arguing that English is difficult or boring. Problems with motivation were also linked to other academic or administrative issues; for example, respondents argued that the poor language proficiency background negatively affected the learners' performance and consequently diminished their disposition to actively participate in pedagogical tasks. Additionally, the lack of resources, the limited time devoted to foreign language learning, and traditional teaching practices also reduced the learners' level of motivation since language learning turned monotonous and unattractive.

Reading and writing arose as the third most relevant trend in the research process; it was evident that in most schools these skills are not given much emphasis. The teacher-researchers said that most students referred to reading and writing as important skills; some of their testimonies stated that:

Reading is an important skill that helps to develop the other language skills. Thus, students have improved their English and they will get better results in the Saber 11 test.

(MA alumnus)

Learning how to use the [reading] strategies allowed them to succeed in other subjects such as social studies, science and Spanish, where reading is important.

(MA student)

Writing is important because learners increased their confidence on writing; secondly, learners improved on the use of writing strategies, and third, the writing process approach also positively impacted learners' writing aspects of form.

(MA alumnus)

This finding confirmed theories by Grabe (1995) and Richards and Renandya (2002) about the need to develop reading skills among learners with strategies to help them interact with the written text. According to some of the high school teachers' comments, weaknesses in this skill were due to the lack of reading preparation and practice in elementary school levels and to the curriculum gaps that did not consider reading relevant in the educational system. They also highlighted that these weaknesses in reading were also reflected in L1 performance which, in some way, explained the learners' reluctance towards reading and their lack of reading habits. Reading problems were also related to the lack of vocabulary and the absence of strategies or techniques to interpret the text which led to poor results in standardized tests, that is, learners were not able to go beyond literal reading failing to infer or argument the content of a written text. As of writing, respondents reported weaknesses stemming from the absence of a defined writing process approach (Polio, 2003; Harmer, 2011); reasons mentioned dealt with weaknesses related to the inability to follow instructions or to the absence of strategies or techniques to connect ideas in a written discourse with correct punctuation, cohesion, and coherence. L1 transfer was also one of the factors that affected this skill since learners tended to write in English with Spanish grammar and syntax; it was also noticed that learners only copied from a source without incorporating their own production or their opinions about their surrounding reality; the internet was also mentioned as a negative factor that limited the learners' creativity; additionally, writing was described as time-consuming turning it difficult for teachers to make it fit the curriculum demands in terms of time allotted for the English classes.

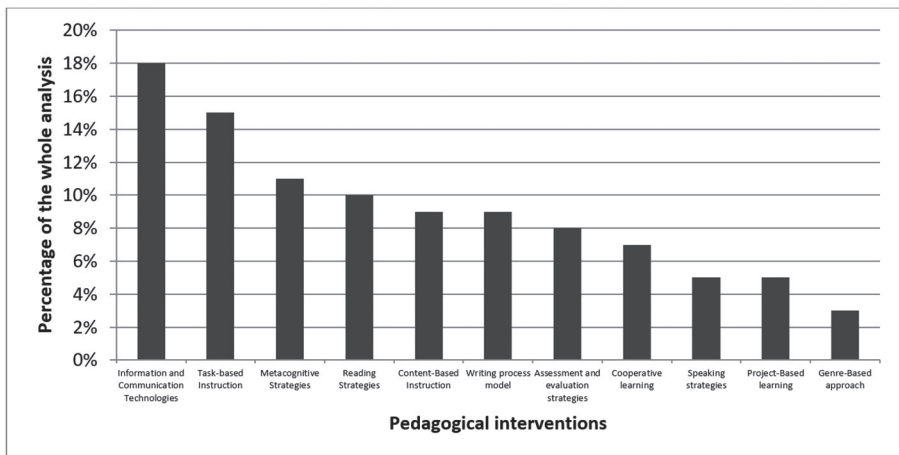
In the fourth place of the statistical analysis of the data shown in Figure 2 appeared vocabulary, curriculum design, materials development, and traditional methodology as areas of concern. Most participants explained that the lack of vocabulary determined to a significant extent the weaknesses in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as discussed by Richards and Renandya (2002) and Hunt and Beglar (2002). Additionally, they suggested that vocabulary weaknesses stem from the lack of resources like visual aids, technological devices or didactic materials to enhance the learning and acquisition of new lexicon; the lack of vocabulary was also mentioned to explain the limitations learners displayed when trying to express themselves for which they always used basic sentences with only a few words or expressions. In the same token, problems with curriculum design were also mentioned because respondents perceived that the lack of organized curricula in their working places made teaching and learning difficult, due to the fact that the absence of clear goals, content, and evaluation criteria along with the lack of enforcement of educational policies about bilingualism represented a problematic factor in their teaching practice as suggested by Graves (2010). Consistent with Richards and Schmidt (2010), the data also reported problems with Materials Development linked to Traditional Methodology; according to most of the respondents, the lack of resources forced teachers to work under the Grammar-Translation Method as the easiest way to have the students rehearse language forms. This weakness represented a factor affecting negatively the learning environment making it turn boring, monotonous, and unpleasant; respondents also stated that this lack of resources made teachers spend valuable time in designing their own materials preventing them from working on more relevant aspects of the teaching practice like curriculum, evaluation or planning.

Although at a lower level in the fifth place of the data analysis, listening and affective factors were also identified as trendy issues in the researched settings; the data showed that listening was probably the least practiced skill because of the high levels of anxiety and frustration that it generated among learners. It was found that teachers preferred traditional classes with written exercises not to make learners feel frustrated or complain about their failure to comprehend spoken language, ratifying what was theorized by Nunan (2002). Additionally, respondents mentioned that there was a need to take advantage of modern media (music, the internet, television, movies) to involve learners in listening tasks to help them improve their language competence. As of negative affective factors, teachers, students and alumni mentioned lack of confidence, anxiety, fear to speak, low self-esteem, and failure to risk-taking as the most common indicators of negative feelings and emotional distress that learners experienced when not able to perform appropriately in L2. Findings confirm what Brown (2004) mentions about the importance of providing learners with a smooth learning atmosphere when learning a language. Participants stated that much needed to be done about the affective domain in language learning, especially to provide learners with enough confidence to trust their own learning and interact with teachers and peers to overcome their language difficulties.

Project Implementation concentrated on ICT, Language Learning Strategies and Methods

The findings of this study show that every program comprised a variety of strategies of intervention to respond to the trends described above. Figure 3 shows that one of the most common ones was the implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) corresponding to 18% of the whole data analysis. This finding aligns with Davies' (2006) statement that maintained that with the use of ICT researchers intended to impact language skills and even the affective domain, due to the attractive features for new generations. This type of interventions included the use of computers, pedagogical software, online tools, and even cell phones, as proposed by Hollenbeck and Hollenbeck (2004).

Figure 3. Pedagogical Interventions in Five ELT MA Programs in Colombia



Equally important, Figure 3 shows that the use of teaching approaches was common to all programs in the search for variety in the implementation of tasks and for autonomy, collaboration, teamwork or cooperation; the most used approaches mentioned by the respondents were Task-based Instruction (Nunan, 1999), metacognitive strategies, reading strategies, Content-Based Instruction, the writing process model, Cooperative Learning (Nunan, 1999), and Project-Based Learning (Coombee et al., 2013).

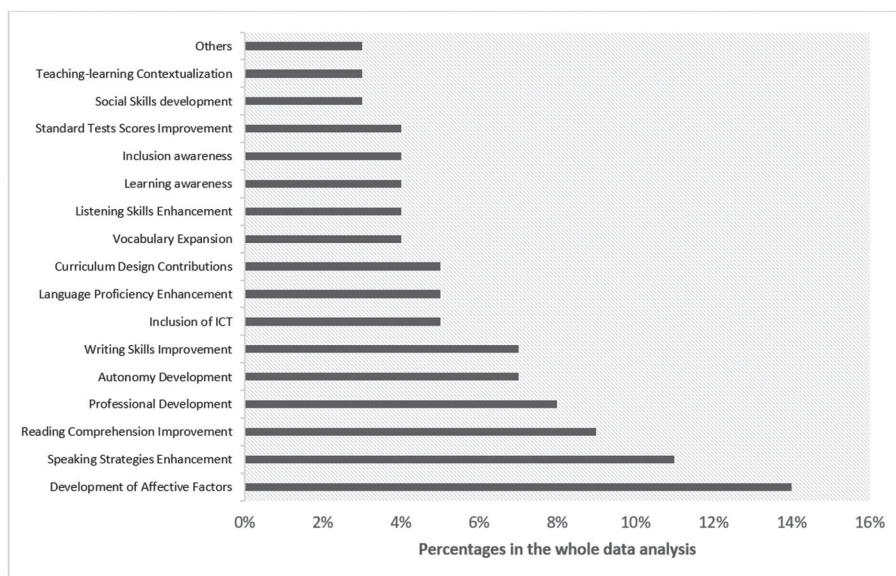
Concerning content in class, it was also common to find approaches intended to adapt the lessons to the contextual needs of the learners, so Content-Based and Theme-Based approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Richards & Renandya, 2002) were frequently mentioned as the strategies of intervention to improve language skills, especially reading. Genre-Based was one of the most used approaches in one of the

programs where the focus was on language use and content, probably because genre was a line of research.

Pedagogical Interventions Addressed Affective and Cognitive Factors.

The findings of this study coming from the statistical analysis showed that as a result of the interventions, affective factors prevailed, especially the development of affective factors with 14% of the data analysis as shown in Figure 4 which was related to the reduction of reluctance to learn, and the increase of learning awareness. Most respondents claimed that their findings referred to the affective domain and they displayed high levels of satisfaction having changed the learners' attitudes towards the L2 learning process. Candidates and graduates reported that students became motivated to learn and advance in their language proficiency. On the other hand, improvement in language skills was also reported, namely speaking with 11%, reading with 9%, writing with 7%, and listening 4% of the whole data analysis concerning the most impacted areas in project implementation. This improvement was described as better performance in language tasks such as oral presentations, role-plays, paragraph composition, reading and listening comprehension activities, and standard tests.

Figure 4. Most Impacted Areas in Project Implementation

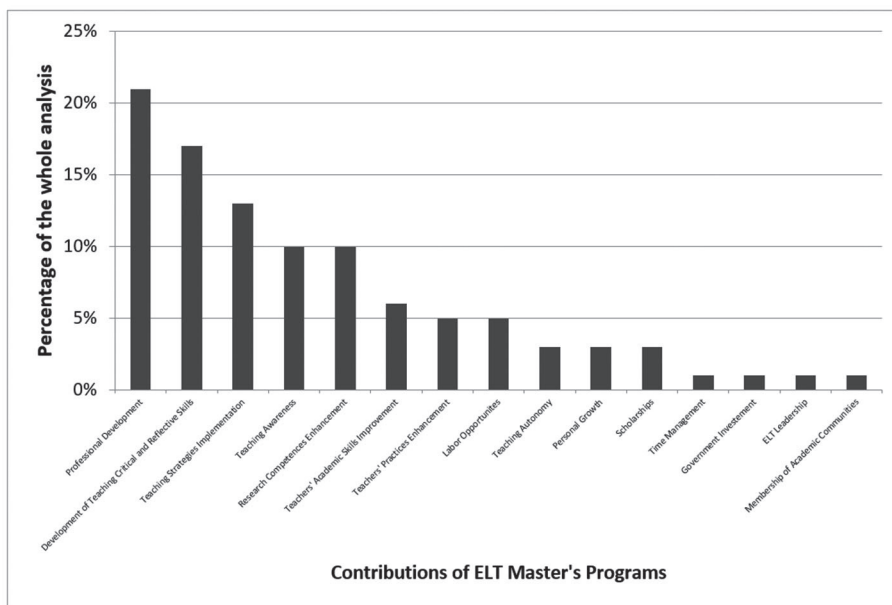


Master's candidates and alumni reported that their students obtained better results in their learning goals attributable to the pedagogical innovations they proposed. These areas also showed positive changes in autonomy development, inclusion of special needs students, social skills development, and language contextualization. Additionally, the researchers found that school curricula are influenced by the suggested curricula of the Ministry of Education (2016b and 2016c).

The MA contributed to professional growth

Finally, the respondents emphasized on their own professional development which was characterized as one of the most important contributions of the Master's; in fact, they perceived it as their most enriching professional development opportunity. Moreover, the participants agreed that being part of such experience represented professional growth that translated in critical and reflective teaching skills, confirming what is discussed by Fandiño-Parra (2011), Macías (2018), Cuesta et al. (2019), Hernández (2015), Viáfara and Largo (2018), and Rideout and Koot (2009) who highlight the importance of reflection in such professional growth process; they also explained that this process involves the theory and practice they obtained in the implementation of their research projects with which they became more critical of their own practice and got to reflect on their own teaching to make informed decisions in the teaching-learning process. Figure 5 summarizes the features of this characterization.

Figure 5. Contributions of ELT Master's Programs as professional Development



According to the analysis of the responses displayed in Figure 5, the research process and the whole master's made them grow professionally, become more reflective and more aware of their own teaching practice. Their preparation at the graduate level helped them implement better strategies according to the students' needs and also represented progress in their academic background, because they reported having studied multiple theories in EFL to be able to design their lessons and provide their learners with improved learning experiences. Respondents explained that their participation in the master's also made them grow as researchers since they incorporated research procedures according to the method of their choice. They claimed they became more aware of the importance of data collection and analysis in their reflective practice.

Concerning their professional and personal profiles, we found that the participants reported that their research experience in the programs helped them get better jobs or promotions, apply to scholarships, gain academic recognition, become leaders in their settings, and most importantly, become better human beings, sensitive to their classroom expectations and social needs. This finding is relevant since there is a need for teachers to gain awareness of the necessity of educating our children to be good citizens, as directed by national policies in this matter (MEN, 2005, 2016b and 2016c). Accordingly, regional and local authorities should allocate appropriate funds to support the continued preparation of teacher-researchers.

Conclusions

The five MA programs were found to be research-oriented in which the “focus is on developing students’ knowledge of and ability to carry out the research methodologies and methods appropriate to their discipline(s) or profession” (Walkington, 2015, p. 9). The research component of the masters equips graduate students with the capabilities needed to identify, understand and explain problematic areas in their settings and to come up with practical solutions to meet their learners’ expectations, that is why we believe a research component should be part of teaching preparation programs at all levels (graduate and undergraduate).

The data suggest that speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary recognition are the most challenging aspects for language teachers and learners in Colombia because they imply not only language knowledge but also control of affective factors such as self-confidence and motivation. These challenges can be overcome with research designs aiming at specific needs; it is important that educational systems promote research projects to help teachers and learners achieve higher competences and standards; moreover, teachers need to be encouraged to develop soft skills among the students, such as problem-solving, creative thinking, teamwork, decision-making and communication skills, among others, to facilitate language learning.

Graduate program administrators should continue strengthening research to promote reflection and achieve changes in teaching practices around the country. Their agenda should imply the promotion of policies at the local, regional and national levels to improve conditions to conduct research. This involves constraints related to teaching, duty overload, size of classes, and even salary to motivate teachers to work at their full potential.

As for methodological issues, the data suggest that in-service teachers rely on multiple pedagogical and curricular possibilities for the planning and adaptation of their classes (Task-Based, ICT, Project-Based, and so on). On the other hand, national policies like the MEN (2016b and 2016c) suggested curricula influence the decisions of in-service teachers. Administrators and policymakers should continue to promote language policies all over the country and to incorporate to them contextual factors to make them more realistic and closer to the interests and expectations of the learners.

Limitations in the availability of didactic materials and technology in some cases translate in traditional teaching practices. Master’s graduates and students have shown with their projects that creativity and resourcefulness can overcome these traditional practices to involve learners in meaningful tasks.

Curriculum design and development, including assessment and evaluation and professional development, correspond to one of the most important tools that teachers can use to innovate and update their contexts, so, masters' programs are expected to prepare teachers as curriculum developers and teacher educators to make them be part of educational changes at the local, regional and national level in order to make them match Kumaravadivelu's (2012) proposal about the need to educate teachers for a globalized world in which not only knowledge but also culture, identity, context and self-reflection make up a teaching professional.

Research at the master's level promotes changes and innovation concerning not only language skills but also culture in the classroom, cross-curriculum, classroom management, online teaching and learning, teaching special needs students, bilingualism, overall language learning, and social issues; the teacher-researchers in the five programs that participated in this study are good examples of contributors to social progress that policymakers need to continue to include in their action plans.

Although most research methods provide teachers with important tools to intervene and change their classrooms, Action Research represents the most valuable method for participants; in fact, it enabled them to reflect on their own practices and act to enhance them day after day.

To conclude, it can be stated that the master's programs represent one of the most enriching professional development opportunities for teachers; preparation at this level equips them with language tools, methodological and research resources and skills that translate into transformed practices and ways of thinking, that is why Colombian teacher education programs should strengthen the research component of their curricula in order to provide master's candidates with opportunities to investigate their settings and promote changes to respond realistically to learners' needs and expectations, for example, areas such as the language skills, motivation, the use of ICT and affective factors in language learning could continue to be explored.

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Appendix 1. Survey to students and alumni

Title of study, instructions and the first section about demographic information intentionally omitted

9. II. About your Research Project design. Please answer or mark the options that best apply to you. Indicate the topic of your Research Project:

- ☐ Affective factors in the EFL class
- ☐ Autonomy
- ☐ Bilingualism
- ☐ Content-Based Instruction
- ☐ Cross-curriculum
- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Curriculum Design
- ☐ English Learning Process
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the EFL class
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Literacy
- ☐ Materials development
- ☐ Methodology
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Online Teaching / Learning
- ☐ Productive skills
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Teacher Education / Professional Development
- ☐ Teaching Special Needs Students
- ☐ Testing / Evaluation / Assessment
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Other

10. If other research topics in the previous question, please elaborate here:

11. Check the context where you developed your research project:

- ☐ Public school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Public University
- ☐ Private University
- ☐ English Institute
- ☐ Other

12. If another context in the previous question, please elaborate here:

13. Check the method of your research design:

- ☐ Survey research
- ☐ Experimental research
- ☐ Quasi-experimental research
- ☐ Case Study
- ☐ Ethnography
- ☐ Action Research
- ☐ Mixed Methods
- ☐ Other

14. If another research method in the previous question, please elaborate here:

15. Indicate the sample population you worked with in the research project:

- ☐ Pre-school
- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ College students
- ☐ Non-formal education students

16. Check the size range your sample population corresponds to:

- ☐ 1 to 5 participants
- ☐ 10 to 20 participants
- ☐ 20 to 30 participants
- ☐ 30 to 40 participants
- ☐ More than 40 participants

17. Choose the level of Proficiency of your sample population before project implementation:

- ☐ A-
- ☐ A1
- ☐ A2
- ☐ B1
- ☐ B2
- ☐ C1

18. Indicate the data collection techniques and instruments used in the research project implementation: (More than one option allowed)

- ☐ Anecdotal records
- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Class reports
- ☐ Diaries / journals
- ☐ Documentary analysis
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Language elicitation measures
- ☐ Life/career histories or narratives
- ☐ Maps and displays
- ☐ Observation forms
- ☐ Oral communication schemes
- ☐ Portfolios
- ☐ Self-assessment forms
- ☐ Stimulated recalls
- ☐ Surveys
- ☐ Transcriptions
- ☐ Video/audio recordings
- ☐ Other/s

19. If other instruments in the previous question, please list them here:

20. III. About your research project implementation and results

Please answer the following questions taking into consideration your research implementation and results.

Check the areas of improvement (problems) that you identified in the diagnostic stage of your study: (More than one option available)

- ☐ Affective Factors
- ☐ Cultural awareness
- ☐ Curriculum Design
- ☐ Discipline
- ☐ EFL Methodology
- ☐ Evaluation
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ L2 Literacy
- ☐ Language Skills (listening)
- ☐ Language Skills (reading)
- ☐ Language Skills (speaking)
- ☐ Language Skills (writing)
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Resources and Materials
- ☐ Teaching Special needs students
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Other

- 21. If other areas of improvement or problems in the previous question, please elaborate here.
- 22. Please, describe in brief the technique, strategy or approach that you chose to intervene in the identified area of improvement
- 23. Please, describe in brief the most outstanding findings of your research project
- 24. Please, explain how your research project impacted your setting and contributed to the national goals established by the “Colombia Bilingüe” program.
- 25. Add any additional comments about your project implementation and results.

Appendix 2. Interview to administrators

Administrators/Directors Interview

Rationale intentionally omitted

Guiding Questions:

1. Which curriculum policies guide the research component in your ELT program?
2. What kind of methodology/method do you promote in the Master's'? Why?
3. As an administrator, what are your main concerns, about the master students and graduates' research experience in the program?
4. Which are the main areas of improvement (research problems) commonly identified by your students and alumni in the diagnostic stage of the research projects?
5. What type of research procedure (methods, techniques, and instruments) are being used or were used by the students and alumni to intervene in the areas of improvement?
6. How did your alumni's research projects' findings have an impact on the teaching context or the National Bilingual Program?

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Enhancing Permanence for Vocabulary Learning on 2nd Grade Students in Turkey Through Music¹

Mejora de la Permanencia en el
Aprendizaje de Vocabulario en
Estudiantes de Segundo Grado en
Turquía a Través de la Música

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Abstract

Music plays an important role in students' language development. Because the process of acquiring and developing language skills of the individual and learning to make music work have many similarities. In this quasi-experimental study, teaching the word in L1 with music with the normal intelligence and development level of 2nd-grade students on the learning of the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word has been examined. A quasi-experimental design with the experiment and control group was used in the study. In the study words, whose meanings are unlikely to be known by the students, in contexts, and success tests prepared to measure these words' meanings were used as data collection tools. The research was carried out with 43 second-grade students, and the data were analyzed with an ANOVA test. According to the study results, it is concluded that the teaching of vocabulary with music, both the meaning of the word and providing the persistence of learning, was found to be useful. Besides, when the permanence of the words whose meaning is learned is examined, it was revealed that teaching vocabulary with music also supports permanent learning.

Keywords: Music, vocabulary teaching, learning the meaning of the word, permanence, elementary grades, mother tongue

Resumen

La música juega un papel crucial en el desarrollo del lenguaje de los estudiantes. Porque el proceso de adquirir y desarrollar conocimientos, aptitudes así como habilidades y el proceso de saber como hacer que la música tienen muchas similitudes. En este estudio cuasi-experimental, se examinó el efecto de la enseñanza de la palabra en L1 con música con el nivel normal de inteligencia y desarrollo de los alumnos de 2º grado sobre el aprendizaje del significado de la palabra y la garantía de la permanencia de la palabra. En las palabras de estudio, cuyos significados apenas son conocidos por los estudiantes, en contextos; y pruebas de éxito preparadas para medir los significados de estas palabras fueron utilizadas como herramienta de recolección de datos. La investigación se realizó con 43 estudiantes de segundo grado y los datos se analizaron con la prueba ANOVA. De acuerdo con los resultados del estudio se concluye que se encontró útil la enseñanza de las palabras con música tanto para el aprendizaje del significado de la palabra como para su sostenibilidad. Además, cuando se examina la permanencia o la constancia de las operaciones se reveló que enseñar vocabulario con música también apoya el aprendizaje permanente.

Palabras Clave: Música, enseñanza de vocabulario, aprendizaje del significado de la palabra, permanencia, grados elementales, lengua materna

Resumo

A música cumpre um papel crucial no desenvolvimento da linguagem dos estudantes. O processo de aquisição e desenvolvimento de conhecimentos e aptidões, assim como habilidades no processo de saber como fazer música têm muitas similitudes. Neste estudo quase experimental, examinou-se o efeito do ensino da palavra em L1 com música dentro do nível normal de inteligência e desenvolvimento dos alunos de 2º grau sobre a aprendizagem do significado da palavra e a garantia da permanência da palavra. No estudo se utilizaram como ferramentas de coleta de dados palavras cujos significados provavelmente não sejam conhecidos pelos estudantes, em contextos, e provas de sucesso preparadas para medir o significado destas palavras. A pesquisa foi realizada com 43 estudantes de segundo grau e os dados se analisaram com a prova ANOVA. De acordo com os resultados do estudo se concluiu que se encontrou útil o ensino das palavras com música tanto para a aprendizagem do significado da palavra quanto para sua sustentabilidade. Além disso, quando se examina a permanência ou a constância das operações, se revelou que ensinar vocabulário com música também apoia a aprendizagem permanente.

Palavras Chave: Música, ensino de vocabulário, aprendizagem do significado da palavra, permanência, graus elementares, língua materna

Introduction

When educational researches conducted in recent years are examined, it is seen that multi-disciplinary studies come to the fore (Gruenewald, 2003). The fact that the teaching activities are specific to a single area is insufficient in academic and general academic success in that area. For this reason, it is more challenging to reach educational goals (Stubbs, Zimmerman, Warner, & Myers, 2018). At this point, it is essential to configure the areas to be established while teaching correctly. Because these areas will be included in the teaching processes together, a relationship must be established in the student's mind cognitively. It is known that the use of artistic works in language teaching is a correct structure. Music is one of the areas recommended for language teaching (Feld & Fox, 1994). Music should be an essential factor in language teaching. With music's help, students express themselves more enjoyably, giving more advantage for communicating with others and expressing themselves, and getting relaxed (Linnavalli, Putkinen, Lipsanen, Huotilainen, & Tervaniemi, 2018). Studies show that continuing together music and language teaching has many positive results (Winters & Griffin, 2014). Because while students learn something through music, they also enjoy this process. At this point, the fact that the students were entertained in the teaching process increased the success. In addition, since music is an area in which language skills are used, it is considered useful for students' language development (Jahan, 2017).

Literature Review

Little children are naturally inclined to action, clapping, dancing, and having fun with music. It is stated that this disposition originates from the nature of the child having music and rhythm (Winters & Griffin, 2014). This means that when a child is singing and tapping out a rhythm, start dancing upon hearing music; it is a product of the child's inner motivation and his/her desire. Thus, it is thought to be useful that this self-motivated activity of the child is combined with language teaching; because language learning shows a dull characteristic, especially for the little aged children. Besides that, language teaching only by the use of a single method is often insufficient. Within this context carrying out music and language teaching would enable both fields to be more permanently acquired and the process to be more fun.

It is known that music and language development have a meaningful relationship. Streeter (1976) suggested that newborn infants have common linguistic reactions even though they were born to different geographical regions. Chomsky stated that infants are born with an innate linguistic capacity in the later years, and their language development follows similar steps even in different communities. After Chomsky, Locke

asserted that infants have an innate capacity to distinguish sounds, including musical sounds. Many researchers stated that language and music capacities are innate, and they have an inseparable connection (Fedorenke, Patel, Casasanto, Winaver, & Gibson, 2009; Peretz, 2006). From this point of view, language and music are more meaningful in consideration of the human's biological structure, and it can be concluded that they will support educational studies in this field.

It is more important to maintain these two areas interactively, especially in primary school age. Because many skills for children of primary school age are very open to development. The primary school period is very critical for the development of students' language skills too. Language skills developed in this period will positively reflect students' academic success and social relations in the future. Thus, it is considered important to use music activities that students have fun to improve their language skills in primary school period (Savitri & Rahman, 2016).

Vocabulary Learning

One of the most important aspects of language learning is vocabulary learning; it starts with birth and continues until the end. In other words, the person's words throughout his/her life (Celis Nova, Onatra Chavarro, & Zubieta Córdoba, 2017) affect the whole life. However, a person learns much more words during childhood. While the word learning process before formal education is mostly family and environment-centered, it takes a more systematical form with the introduction of the curriculum at the primary school. This aims to increase the number of words required for the learning process and behavioral change. In addition to this, words are crucial for understanding courses, framing correct communication, and actively using socializing skills. Many researchers agree that vocabulary learning is one of the most important steps of mother tongue acquisition (Fan, 2003; Gu, 2003; Ma 2009).

Teaching words have high importance concerning language acquisition. Because of this, it is recommended to use different methods and techniques while teaching vocabulary. The first and most classic method is using a dictionary. When students encounter an unknown word in classes, they look it up from their dictionaries and see these words in sentences. Then, they use those words in their sentences.

Another method used in teaching vocabulary is using visual prompts. While teaching a word with visual prompts, a visual prompt containing the meaning of the word is shown to the students, and then the meaning is given to them. Thereby, students can visually see the word which they have just learned.

The verbal explanation is also a commonly used technique in teaching vocabulary. In this technique, the teacher explains the meaning of the word verbally; and synonyms,

antonyms, and homonyms are found with the students' interaction. Context-based vocabulary teaching is a technique for teaching vocabulary. In this technique, words are given within a context, and the meanings are comprehended by the students (Gür, 2014). Apart from these techniques mentioned above, another technique used in teaching vocabulary is teaching vocabulary through music.

Building Bridges between Music and Vocabulary Skills

It has been found that, since there is a close resemblance between musical and linguistic structures, children singing songs has a fast development in many linguistic skills, especially vocabulary skills (Cohen, 2010; Montgomery, 2002; Piro & Ortiz, 2009). This situation reveals that teaching vocabulary through music is useful. Montgomery (2002) claimed that music and language are parallel with each other in terms of grammatical structure, phoneme, syntax, and semantics. It is thought that this parallel structure helps accelerate students' language development when their teaching vocabulary is combined with music. Also, it has been proved that singing and music books help improve students' vocabulary learning (Montgomery, 2012).

Besides, music has a profound effect on memory (de Groot, 2006). Researchers have reported that music increases memory power more than many other methods. This effect also exists for vocabulary teaching. Even though this effect is mainly used in L2 learning (de Groot, 2006; Engh, 2013; Zeromskaite, 2014) it can be considered a factor that explains the better understanding of words for vocabulary teaching in the mother tongue. Students who continuously repeat words through music understand the meaning of words and their use in sentences better. This is a good way for them to learn words better. This situation, as a whole, created a curiosity about the effect of combining vocabulary teaching and music on Turkish students' vocabulary learning.

However, it is also known that teaching vocabulary through music has some challenges for the teachers. First of all, in teaching vocabulary through music, writing lyrics and composing them to teach unknown words is a hard task that requires mastery; lyrics should both give the meaning of the word and be in line with students' level. Besides that, lyrics must be composed to be sung with the students, which is a time-consuming task. These challenges may be hard to overcome; however, they can be achieved by cooperating with teachers of different disciplines. For example, a class teacher can cooperate with the music teacher to teach vocabulary through music. In this way, the responsibility can be divided, and the process does not take too long for just one teacher; and this also improves teachers' interdisciplinary skills.

Justification of the Study

When the literature concerns the relationship between music and language is carefully examined, there is a belief that it should be useful to carry out these studies together. However, the challenge of carrying out these studies together arises as a restricting factor. Besides, it is stated that studies on music and language acquisition are mostly carried out with individuals who have literacy disadvantages like dyslexia (Welch, Saunders, Hobsbaum, & Himonides, 2012). Also, few studies on music and vocabulary teaching at the primary school level (Ho, 2017). It is seen that studies on this subject are mostly on second language teaching (Jahan, 2017, Palacios & Chapetón, 2014). In this context, studies are needed to examine the effects of teaching vocabulary with music on learning the meaning of the word and ensuring its permanence in terms of revealing how it will be handled systematically. Also, the fact that this study has been carried out with have normal intelligence and development level students increases its importance. In this context, in this study, the effect of teaching words with music with the normal intelligence and development level of 2nd-grade students on the learning of the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word has been examined.

Method

Research Design

In this research, a quasi-experimental design with the experimental and control group was used for collecting, analyzing, and interpret the data. We examined the effect of teaching vocabulary through music with the normal intelligence and development level of 2nd-grade students in Turkey on learning the meaning of the word in mother tongue and ensuring the permanence of the word.

Researchers are to study with predetermined, existing groups rather than artificial ones developed by them in educational studies. The reason for this is it is not possible to create artificial groups within the continuing education process. Researchers use existing ready groups since they cannot randomize students to create artificial groups. In those studies, while the experiment and control groups are randomly determined, these groups' subjects cannot be randomly chosen since it is not possible to create artificial groups during the education process. Especially for the studies carried out with students in formal education, appointing students to experiment and control groups would create setbacks for the education process. Because of this, pedagogues prefer predetermined, not artificial groups and quasi-experimental designs (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2011; Mertens, 2010). The researcher randomly appointed an experiment and a control group among similar groups with similar properties

according to analysis results. Thereby, it is aimed to minimize threats on internal validity brought to the research field by the nature of the quasi-experimental design.

In this study, at first quantitative data collected, and the effect of teaching words with music on 2nd-grade students' learning the meaning of the word and ensuring the word's permanence has been examined. Unusually, it has been examined whether the independent variable (teaching vocabulary through music) affects the dependent variable (2nd-grade students' learning the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word). Below, the figure of the quasi-experimental design has been shown.

Table 1. The Figure of Quasi-experimental Design

Determining	Groups	Pre- test	Experimental process	Post-test	Permanence Test
M	G1	O1	X	O2	O3
	G2	O4		O5	O6

Note: M: Matching G1: Experimental Group G2: Control Group X: Teaching vocabulary through music studies O1, O4: Pre-test Scores O2, O4: Post-test Scores O3, O6: Permanence Test Scores

Study Group

During the 2017-2018 education year spring term, the study was carried out with 43 primary school 2nd-grade students in Bursa province's Nilüfer district in Turkey. Since the quasi-experimental design was used in this study, population and sample were not determined; instead, study groups were determined. Pre-testing was carried out in determining the experimental and control groups, and the two closest groups were determined for the study. The school where the study was carried out was designated on a volunteer basis. Before the study, class teachers of Nilüfer district were consulted and informed that a study on the effect of teaching words with music with the normal intelligence and development level of 2nd-grade students on learning the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word will be carried out. They were also informed about the study process. After that, a school was designated for the study according to these meetings with the teachers. A meeting with the teachers was also arranged at the designated school. Following the teachers' feedback, two teachers who are voluntary and can carry out teaching vocabulary through music according to determining process procedures in their classes were chosen among them. Required permissions were taken for the study.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, words, whose meanings are unlikely to be known by the students, in contexts, and success test prepared to measure these words' meanings were used as data collection tools. The questions of the test were prepared as multiple answer questions, true-false questions, and open-ended questions. In the pre-test, post-test, and permanence test, two same texts were used; and 12 questions -6 questions for each word- about two words, the same words in each text, in those texts were asked (see appendix 1).

While preparing the success test, qualifications needed to be fulfilled by the students were examined, and in accordance with these expectations, questions prepared to test the knowledge of the word meaning, the awareness of the contextual usage of the word, correctly using the word in a sentence, knowing synonyms, homonyms, and far-linked words, and using the word in association with the daily life situations. When preparing the questions, the dimensions of remembering, understanding, and implementing the meaning of the word are considered. After preparing the questions, two experts in the field of class teaching and one expert in the field of Turkish teaching were asked for their opinions; and the data collection tool was finalized in consideration of their feedback.

Before the beginning of the study, the data collection tool was applied in a class by a volunteered teacher. At the end of this pilot scheme, the data collection tool was concluded to be applicable in the study.

Data Analysis

Normality tests were completed to identify the pattern of variables. The scores obtained from the students in the groups were analyzed with an ANOVA test. The difference between pre-test/post-test and permanence results of the experimental group and the difference between pre-test/post-test and permanence results of the control group were analyzed with the Bonferroni test. Type 1 error was pegged at 5 % level ($p < .05$). For the discrete and continuous variables in the study, supplementary variables included mean, standard deviation, standard error, median, minimum, maximum, number, and percentage.

The Instruction Procedure

In this study, the texts were read, and the meaning of the selected words was asked to the students. Later, the meaning of these words was explained, and the students were asked to use the words in sentences. After this stage, sentences create about these words were written in their notebooks. The studies so far have been similar in the

control group. Subsequently, the songs prepared about the words were played to the students in the experimental group, and they were sung many times with them. The songs' meaning was discussed, and an effort was made for the students to memorize the songs. In this process, it was observed that the students also sang outside of the classroom, for example during the breaks and after school. These operations were not performed in the control group.

The Implementation Process

After the school's designation, where the study would be conducted, texts and words to be used in those texts were determined. Concerning these words, success tests were prepared following the processes mentioned in the data collection tools section. After that, composing songs, which would reflect the meanings of those words, started. During this process, firstly, lyrics were written with the help of an academician in music teaching. It was our priority for the lyrics both to reflect the meaning and show its contextual usage (see appendix 2). After writing the lyrics, music and rhythm were added, and songs were recorded in a professional studio. Then, the songs were shared with the experimental group teacher; and s/he was instructed about how to use them. The teacher was told at which stage of the lesson she would perform these songs.

After this process, pre-tests were first done, and later texts were treated with both the experimental and control groups. While in the control group, the teacher taught the words according to the methods and techniques that should be followed in the Turkish Lesson (Primary and Secondary School 1-8 Grades) Education Program (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2015); in the experimental group, the words were taught along with the songs. In this process, a lesson program was prepared for both teachers to reduce the effect caused by the teacher, and they were warned not to go out of the curriculum. Finally, for both groups, post-tests were implemented. After the post-tests, we waited for some time, and after five months, permanence tests were conducted on both groups; and the study was concluded.

To control the external variables that may affect the research's dependent variable, it was tried to ensure that all the activities except the program conducted throughout the application were the same. This issue was discussed with teachers and school administration. Thus, external factors that may affect the research result were minimized.

Findings

Depending on the research's purpose, statistical analyses were performed on the data obtained from the measurement tools through the SPSS program, and the

findings obtained are shared below. In this framework, the students' mean scores in the experimental and control groups from the word success test were compared. Descriptive statistics about the vocabulary pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups word success Pre-test and Post-test Average Scores

Test	Groups	N	X	Standard deviation
Pre-test	Control	21	30,80	7,64
	Experiment	22	29,18	5,32
Post-test	Control	21	33,09	4,49
	Experiment	22	38,90	5,01
Permanence test	Control	21	33,04	2,85
	Experiment	22	39,22	3,16

When Table 2 is examined, is examined, the experimental group students' average scores in the vocabulary teaching activities before the experiment were = 29.18; this value was = 38.90 after the instruction process. While the average scores of the control group students before the experiment were = 30.80, it increased to = 33.09 after the courses were carried out within the Turkish Lesson Curriculum framework. When the average of permanence test is analyzed, it is seen that the average of the experimental group increased to = 39.22 and the average of the control group decreased to = 33.04.

To determine whether the change between the pre-test, post-test, and permanence test mean scores of the experimental and control groups was statistically significant, an ANOVA test was performed for Mixed Measurements. More than one t-test can be done to make these comparisons, but as the number of analyzes performed increases, the error margin of t-tests will increase exponentially. For this reason, the ANOVA test was preferred for Mixed Measurements. The analysis results for this test are given below.

One of the prerequisites that must be met to provide reliable results for the ANOVA test for mixed measurements is that the scores of the dependent variable show the normal distribution in each group (Büyüköztürk, 2012, p. 79). To determine whether the dependent variable scores show the normal distribution in each group, the skewness coefficient (SC) and kurtosis coefficient (KC) of the data were examined. The data on the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the students' pre-test and post-test scores are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Pre-test and Post-test Average Scores

Groups	Tests	N	X	Standard deviation	SC	KC
Control	Pre-test	21	30,80	1,66	,367	-,420
	Post-test	21	33,09	,98	-,171	-,577
	Permanence test	21	33,04	,62	-,067	-1,154
Experiment	Pre-test	22	29,18	1,13	,834	,117
	Post-test	22	38,90	1,06	-,617	-1,154
	Permanence test	22	39,68	,44	-,161	-,704

The fact that skewness and kurtosis's coefficient is close to zero indicates that the distribution is approaching normality. When the distribution is normal, skewness and kurtosis values will be zero (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014, p. 113; Field, 2018, p. 345). However, George and Mallery (2019, p. 114) stated that the coefficient of skewness and kurtosis between 2 and +2 is acceptable in terms of the normality assumption. When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of both experimental and control groups are distributed between -2 and +2. Based on these values, it can be said that the data obtained from the experimental and control groups show normal distribution.

Another assumption that the ANOVA test for Mixed Measurements must be met to provide reliable results is that the variances of the groups are homogeneous in each measurement performed more than once (Can, 2013, p. 222). Accordingly, the Levene test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between the variances of the pre-test, post-test, and permanence test measurements of the experimental and control groups. The results for the Levene test are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Levene Test Results on the Homogeneity of Variances of Word Success Pre-test, Post-test and Permanence Measurements

Tests	F	sd1	sd2	p
Pre-test	3,719	1	41	,061
Post-test	,337	1	41	,565
Permanence test	2,496	1	41	,122

When the Levene test results given in Table 4 are examined, it is seen that there is no difference between the variances of the pre-test, post-test, and permanence test measurements of the experimental and control groups

$$[F_{\text{pre-test}}(1-41)= 3.719; F_{\text{post-test}}(1-41)= 0.337; F_{\text{permanence}}(1-41)= 2.496; p> .05].$$

The ANOVA test's final requirement for Mixed Measurements to provide reliable results is the assumption of sphericity and no significant difference between the covariances of the groups for binary combinations of measurement groups. The situation was checked with the Mauchly Sphericity Test and Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices test. The results for Mauchly Sphericity Test are given in Table 5, and the Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices test are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Word Success Pre-test, Post-test and Permanence Measurements Sphericity Test Results

Measurement	Mauchly W	χ^2	sd	p	Greenhouse-Geisser Correction	Huynh-Feldt Correction
Word Success Test	,598	20,556	2	,000	,713	,750

According to the Mauchly Sphericity Test Results given in Table 5, when the values obtained for the repeated measurements taken from the Word Success Test are examined, it is seen that the sphericity assumption cannot be achieved ($W_{(2)} = .598, p < .05$). For this reason, while analyzing the group's effect regarding the scores obtained from this test, Greenhouse-Geisser correction was made, and the values calculated by SPSS were used.

Table 6. Box's M Test Results Regarding Equality of Covariance Matrix

Box's M	9,923
F	1,522
df1	6
df2	12102,089
p	,166

According to the analysis results in Table 6, it can be said that there is no significant difference between the covariances of the experimental and control groups

$$[F_{(6-12102,089)} = 9.923; p > .05].$$

All these findings show that all of the prerequisites required to provide reliable results for the ANOVA test for Mixed Measurements are met. Accordingly, ANOVA analysis was conducted for Mixed Measurements regarding whether the difference between the mean and pre-test, post-test, and permanence test mean scores of the experimental and control groups were statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. ANOVA Results Regarding the Vocabulary Success Pre-test, Post-test and Permanence Test Scores of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between-Subjects	1713,581	42			
Group (Individual/Group)	419,309	1	419,309	13,283	,001
Error	1294,272	41	31,568		
Within-Subjects	1551,569	61,3749			
Measure	1099,835	1,427	770,895	27,237	,000
(Pre-test/Post-test/Permanence test)	445,199	1,427	312,049	11,025	,000
Group*Measure	1655,592	58,495	28,303		
Error	3265,15	103,349			

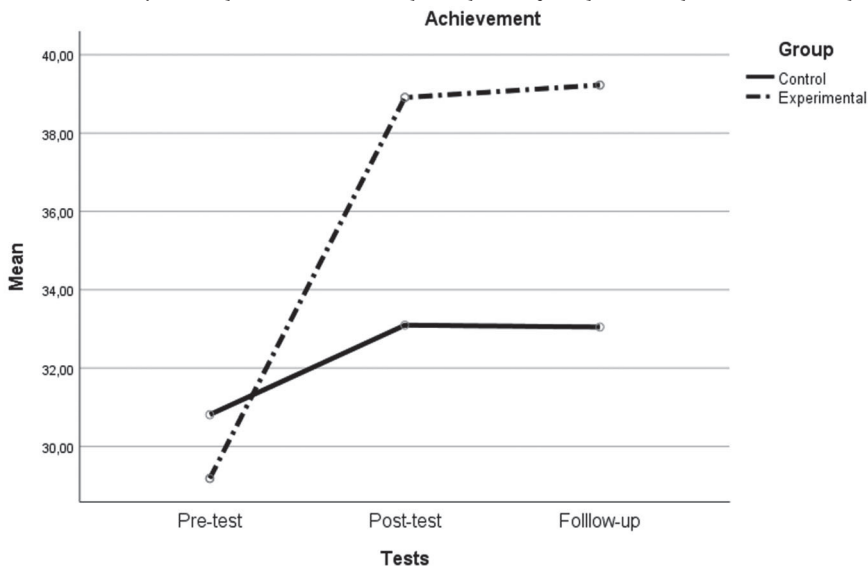
The results of the ANOVA analysis in Table 7 show that the group effect of the students in the experimental and control groups on the mean scores of the word success pre-test, post-test and permanence test is significant [$F_{(1-41)} = 13.283$; $p < .05$]. Based on this finding, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the averages of the experimental and control groups' word success test without making a distinction in the form of pre-test, post-test, and permanence test measurements.

As a result of the ANOVA analysis, it was found that the difference between the mean scores obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and permanence test measurements conduct in the study within the scope of the research was statistically significant [$F_{(1,427-58,495)} = 27.237$; $p < .05$]. This finding shows that when no group distinction is made, the students' word success varies depending on the experimental process. Also, as a result of the examination of the common effect (group * measurement effect) that is important for the research within the scope of this analysis, the vocabulary success of all students participating in the semi-experimental research differed statistically significantly from before the experimental process to the post-experimental process, that is, the factors of repetitive measurements were read by being different process groups. Common effects on comprehension success were found to be significant [$F_{(1,427-58,495)} = 11.025$; $p < .05$]. According to these findings obtained from ANOVA analysis, the Bonferroni test, which is one of the post-hoc binary comparison tests, was carried out to determine between which groups the difference was significant depending on the measurements between the groups. The Bonferroni test is a type of multiple comparison test used in statistical analysis. This test should be used when performing multiple comparative hypothesis tests. The results for the Bonferroni test are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Bonferroni Test Results Regarding Vocabulary Success Pre-test, Post-test, and Retention Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

		Experiment			Control		
		Pre-test (I)	Post-test (I)	Permanence test (I)	Pre-test (I)	Post-test (I)	Permanence test (I)
Experiment	Pre-test (I)	---	-9,727'	-10,500'	-1,628	-3,913	-3,866
	Post-test (I)	9,727'	---	-,773	8,100'	5,814'	5,861'
	Permanence test (I)	10,500'	,773	---	8,872'	6,587'	6,634'
Control	Pre-test (I)	1,628	-8,100'	-8,872'	---	-2,286	-2,238
	Post-test (I)	3,913	5,814'	-6,587'	2,286	---	0,048
	Permanence test (I)	3,866	-5,861'	-6,634'	2,238	-0,048	---

When the Bonferroni comparison results in Table 8 are analyzed, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of the experiment (= 29.18) and control group (= 30.80) students. Based on this result, it can be said that the groups included in the research are equal in terms of word success before the experimental study. After performing the experimental procedures, it is understood that the difference between the experimental (= 38.90) and the control group (= 33.09) post-test mean scores is statistically significant. The same is true for the permanence test results. When the results were examined, it was found that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the permanence test of the experiment (= 39.68) and control group (= 33.04) students. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis are also shown in the graph of change. The change graph for the ANOVA test for Mixed Measurements is given in Figure 1.



When Figure 1 is analyzed, it can be seen that the mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups increased in the semi-experimental application process. After 120 days of semi-experimental practice, the students' word success score increased in the experimental group, but the control group's average score decreased.

Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

Since it is stated that studies literature on music and language acquisition is mostly carried out with individuals who have literacy disadvantage (like dyslexia); in this study, the effect of teaching words with music has the normal intelligence and development level students that is, does not need special education on the learning of the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word has been examined. According to the study results, it is concluded that the teaching of vocabulary with music, both the meaning of the word and providing the permanence of learning, was found to be useful.

Trippney (2010), with the meta-analysis study that he carried out, emphasized the link between music and learning; and investigated how teaching music affects other fields of learning. Within this research scope, twenty-four studies have been examined; and music-related teaching has been seen to be useful for audio awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and word fluency. Dockrell, Stuart, and King (2000) made audio-book reading sessions with the program they prepared for the students. At the end of the study, they concluded that it had a meaningful difference in vocabulary knowledge and understanding what they read. In their study with 46 students between the ages of six and nine, Corrigan and Trainor (2011) stated a relationship between understanding what the students read and the length of their music education. And, also, Gromko (2005), Register et al. (2007), and Piro and Ortis (2009) stated that music education affects understanding what one reads. Stanley and Hughes (1997) also revealed that music impacts students' writing skills.

When all these studies are considered, it can be concluded that music can be useful for skills related to different dimensions of native language education. It is noticeable that some reasons for the improvement are stressed when we analyze the results of studies on the effect of music on language learning.

First of all, teaching with music has many advantages; and the improvement seen on the students can be transferred to other fields and helps students' language skills be improved one of the most remarked advantages. Devlin and Seidel (2009) stated that the music education systematically given to the students might help students to develop many skills that they can use at many different levels throughout their lives. These skills include creativity, connections between different situations, esthetical awareness, and self-expressiveness (McIntire, 2007).

One of the reasons why teaching music helps improving language skills, especially vocabulary learning, is that the vocalization of symbols while reading resembles the process of vocalization in music. For example, the process of reading notes and vocalizing them while playing a musical instrument or singing resembles following and understanding symbols while reading (Hamsen & Bernstore. 2002). Similarly, both reading notes in music and vocalizing letters while the normal reading process goes from left to right. This factor is thought to be the leading, supporting factor why music is useful for many skills like vocabulary learning and reading (Lloyd, 1978).

Morrow (1996) defended the idea that music can be very useful for vocabulary teaching. Morrow especially stressed the affective aspects of music on children and claimed that enjoyable songs might help students learn the meaning of words. Woodall and Ziembroski (2004) stressed that words learned while listening to songs could be a resourceful vocabulary learning unit. When this study is evaluated and other studies in the literature, it can be concluded that music is useful in developing a lot of skills besides understanding what has been read and vocabulary learning. However, as we mentioned in the introduction, the scarcity of studies conducted with normal students is highly remarkable. So, studies conducted with students of normal intelligence and development levels on the effects of music on language skills are needed more. Besides, in this study, the effect of music on learning the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word has been examined. Yet, it is suggested for other studies to be conducted on the possible effects of teaching words with music with the normal intelligence and development level of students on the learning of the meaning of the word and ensuring the permanence of the word to be examined. Besides, the studies are recommended to be emphasizing students' affective aspects and what they experienced during the process. In this respect, it is thought to be important that, after the students are taught music, the qualitative analysis should be done about what they experienced and how they felt. According to the studies conducted, it is thought to be useful to combine music with other teaching fields instead of being a separate lesson. Within this context, it shouldn't be forgotten that academicians, politicians, and pedagogues, who arrange education programs, have a big responsibility to integrate music and art activities with other classes.

Limitations of the Study

It is also known that teaching vocabulary with music has difficulties for teachers. First of all, writing and composing lyrics for words with unknown meaning in word teaching with music is a difficult task that requires expertise. Because it requires both written lyrics to give the meaning of the word, and these words should be prepared according to students' age levels. Apart from this, it takes time to compose the written song and make it readable with students. Even such compelling reasons can make this technique difficult to use, but it can be achieved through cooperation and teachers'

help working in different disciplines. For example, a classroom teacher can practice the word teaching technique with music and the school's music teacher. In this way, both the tasks are shared, and the responsibility is shared among the teachers, and the process is not too long for a teacher, and the teachers' interdisciplinary working skills develop. Apart from this, the sample size is small for this research, which is considered a limitation. For this reason, it is recommended to work with a larger sample size in future studies.

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Moving from What Do English Teachers know? to *How Do English Teachers Experience Knowledge?* A Decolonial Perspective in the Study of English Teachers' Knowledge.¹

Partiendo de ¿Qué saben los profesores de inglés? a *¿Cómo experimentan los profesores de inglés el conocimiento?* Una perspectiva decolonial en el estudio del conocimiento de los profesores de inglés

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Abstract

There has been a continuing interest in defining what comprises English teachers' knowledge with the purpose of defining the boundaries of the English Teaching field and developing it as a respected discipline in education (Richards, 1990). The objective of this paper, shaped by the tenets of the Decolonial Turn, is to share some of the results of studying teachers' knowledge with a view of knowledge described by Anzaldúa (2000) as "an overarching theory of consciousness... that tries to encompass all the dimensions of life, both inner –mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, bodily realms—and outer—social, political, lived experiences." (p. 177). Data were gathered by means of testimonial narratives, and their analysis followed some guidelines of Benmayor's (2012) framework of testimonial narratives writing and communal analysis. The study is also inspired by and grounded on the *Epistemologies of the South* (Sousa Santos, 2004, 2006, 2016, 2018) to think of knowledge beyond the cognitive experiences of teachers. Some of the results show that teachers' knowledge is something experienced by them not only in their cognition but also in their emotions and body. Not only do teachers rely on content, pedagogical or methodological knowledge, but also on emotion, as evidenced in a sample of teachers' testimonial narratives.

Key words: English teachers' knowledge; decolonial turn in ELT; bodies of knowledge; teacher's emotional knowledge

Resumen

Ha existido un continuo interés por definir en qué consiste el conocimiento del docente de inglés con el propósito de definir los límites del campo de la enseñanza de esta lengua. El objetivo del artículo, enmarcado dentro de las premisas del giro decolonial, es compartir algunos de los resultados del estudio sobre el conocimiento docente teniendo como concepto de conocimiento lo descrito por Anzaldúa (2000). El conocimiento entendido como "una teoría de la consciencia global... que intenta abarcar todas las dimensiones de la vida, tanto internas como externas -los reinos de lo emocional, lo mental, lo imaginativo, lo espiritual, y lo corpóreo" (p.177). Los datos fueron recolectados por medio de narrativas testimoniales cuyo análisis estuvo basado en algunas de las pautas encontradas en el trabajo de Benmayor (2012) para escribir y comunitariamente analizar narrativas testimoniales escritas por profesores de inglés. El estudio también está inspirado y fundamentado en *Las Epistemologías del Sur* (Sousa Santos, 2004, 2006, 2016, 2018) para pensar sobre el conocimiento mucho más allá de las experiencias cognitivas de los docentes. Algunos de los resultados del estudio muestran que el conocimiento no es sólo una experiencia cognitiva sino emocional y corpórea. Los docentes de inglés no sólo utilizan los conocimientos metodológicos, pedagógicos o de contenido, sino que también experimentan el conocimiento a través de la emoción, como se muestra en un ejemplo de narrativa testimonial.

Palabras clave: conocimiento de los docentes de inglés; giro decolonial en la enseñanza de inglés; cuerpos de conocimiento; conocimiento emocional del docente

Resumo

Tem existido um contínuo interesse por definir em que consiste o conhecimento do docente de inglês com o propósito de definir os limites da área do ensino desta língua. O objetivo do artigo, no âmbito das premissas da virada decolonial, é compartilhar alguns dos resultados do estudo sobre o conhecimento docente tendo como conceito de conhecimento o descrito por Anzaldúa (2000). O conhecimento entendido como “uma teoria da consciência global... que tenta abranger todas as dimensões da vida, tanto internas como externas - os reinos do emocional, o mental, o imaginativo, o espiritual, e o corpóreo” (p.177). Os dados foram coletados por meio de narrativas testemunhais cuja análise esteve baseada em algumas das pautas encontradas no trabalho de Benmayor (2012) para escrever e comunitariamente analisar narrativas testemunhais escritas por professores de inglês. O estudo também está inspirado e fundamentado em *As Epistemologias do Sul* (Sousa Santos, 2004, 2006, 2016, 2018) para pensar sobre o conhecimento muito mais além das experiências cognitivas dos docentes. Alguns dos resultados do estudo mostram que o conhecimento não é só uma experiência cognitiva senão emocional e corpórea. Os docentes de inglês não só utilizam os conhecimentos metodológicos, pedagógicos ou de conteúdo, senão que também experimentam o conhecimento através da emoção, como se mostra em um exemplo de narrativa testemunhal.

Palavras chave: conhecimento dos docentes de inglês; virada decolonial no ensino de inglês; corpos de conhecimento; conhecimento emocional do docente

Introduction

In this article I investigate the quest for English teachers' knowledge. Such inquiry is informed by some theoretical tenets of the *Epistemologies of the South* (Sousa Santos, 2004, 2009, 2016, 2018) and the Decolonial Turn (Mignolo, 2000, 2013; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). The issue of knowledge has caught the attention of local scholars, among other things because it has been said that English teachers' knowledge has not been considered when, for example, framing public policy in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Cárdenas, 2004, González, 2007). My interest in English teachers' knowledge goes beyond the categorizations of knowledge that have been persistent in ELT education, namely, those of cognitive or socio-cultural perspectives of content knowledge, methodological knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, to name but a few.

Along the document, I will be using the first-person personal pronoun “I” and other first person language markers aligned with reflections upon the need for researchers to develop self-reflexivity in the research process (see for example Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2007, 2009). Within postmodern or post structural traditions, there has been discussions on the writing of research reports. Particularly, Rudolph (2016) contends that “researchers actively reveal their subjectivities in conceptualizing and approaching their studies.” (p. 2) Ramos-Holguin & Peñaloza Rallón (2020) highlight that “in academic writing, emotionality and subjectivity are almost always suppressed for objectivity” (p. 40) and one of such signs is the use of impersonal language. From a Decolonial perspective, it is necessary to re-connect our minds, bodies, and emotions, even in research endeavors.

One tenet of the Decolonial Turn is to contest certain practices of Western research such as concealing the subjects of research be them the researcher or the participants for the so-called sake of objectivity. Regarding this issue, Grosfoguel (2013) also explains that the Cartesian view of knowledge is what has stood out, for at least three hundred and eighty-three years in the university context. In that train of thought, there continues to be a tendency to see that knowledge is more valid if it aims at neutrality, impartiality, and universality; that is, if it aims at not being framed within a particular location, a particular body, a particular geography, or a particular person.

Within the ELT field, there has been almost a fascination with documenting the knowledge needed to teach ‘effectively’. That is why much discussion revolves around content knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, methodological knowledge, etc., and mostly the sources of knowledge are thought to be coursework, authors, communities of practice, degrees, books, articles, and so forth. It is but logical that these issues become of interest in the ELT field because that is what the ELT discipline is primarily concerned with; even so, other sources of knowledge are hardly ever considered. In fact, when describing other types of knowledge authors resort to saying that there also exists “a practical knowledge” or “the wisdom of practice” (Shulman, 1984, 2004, Cruz Arcila, 2018), or an “implicit knowledge” of teaching gained in “non-formal ways”

(Mendoza & Roux, 2016). Such terms entail that there are other knowledges which are hardly ever fully approached.

The focus of this paper is on practices of knowledge that come into play during the acts of teaching and learning narrated by participating teachers as tipping moments in their professional lives. What teachers describe as seminal, yet difficult moments, reveal knowledges that might go unnoticed when teaching and learning. What I mean is, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and methodological knowledge are not the only types of knowledge that teachers cultivate in their professional life to face teaching and learning. Previous attempts to re-conceptualize knowledge have been observed in Kincheloe (2004, p. 51), with his critical-complex view of teacher's knowledge "including but not limited to empirical, experiential, normative, critical, ontological, and reflective-synthetic domains."

Other ways of knowing or probably other relations teachers develop towards knowledge might not have been sufficiently explored in the ELT field leading to a waste of valuable experience. I would like to advance the idea of teachers' 'ecology of knowledges' (Sousa Santos, 2006).

An ecology is about recognizing how plural and heterogenous knowledges are and the need for a respectful interrelation among them (Sousa Santos, 2007). In this inquiry, I normally use the plural *knowledges* because I agree with Sousa Santos (2009) when stating that we should move from one canon of knowledge (a canon that entails one single way of looking at time, social classification, and that naturalizes hierarchies, and holds a productivity driven mind-set) to an ecology of knowledges whose intention is to allow a more horizontal relationship between scientific knowledge and other ways of knowing. In the ELT field, such canon of knowledge is observed in expected levels of achievement, native/non-native divides, or delimited fields of knowledge that normally consider the cognitive or socio-cultural dimensions but may leave aside other existing realities that also encompass knowledge.

I embrace the idea of knowledge as comprised of those experiences that we live in flesh and blood based on the geopolitical location of our bodies (Mignolo, 2000). Indeed, the co-existence of scientific and other forms of knowledge within teachers' construction of their being as teachers is still underexplored in our field because of the overarching emphasis of studying teachers' knowledge from cognitive or socio-cultural perspectives. This research paper unveils those seminal experiential knowledges that sometimes are taken as "teachers' tacit knowledge", but which are hardly ever documented. I am particularly interested in tracing the '*knowledge otherwise*' (Escobar, 2003). I mean that there is need to acknowledge that many teachers, like myself, live on the border of different worlds; we learned (and continue to re-learn and unlearn) the prestigious English language, the methodologies, the concepts, the educational patterns from the Global North, but we are geopolitically located bodies in the Global South. This geopolitical location suffers the colonial difference, that is, the dispossession, the marketization of our resources, the effects of war, the displacement, the struggle for

opportunities to thrive, the lack of legitimacy of the teaching profession, and the loss of hope for a better future. In that train of thought, we rely on multiple ways of knowing to cope with learning, teaching, and living.

The ELT field has extensively theorized the knowledge necessary to teach effectively; however, I am more interested in what Gloria Anzaldúa (2000) calls 'theories in the flesh', that is, how the experiences lived in flesh make up our teaching personas, how for example experiences of joy and sorrow, come into play when entering classrooms. Often, the knowledge for teaching English is reduced to knowing the code, the method, the strategies to teach. I mean the overprivileged knowledge of the language and the methods excel in relevance compared to other forms of knowing that go unnoticed when teaching. The other forms of knowledge have remained, as Grosfoguel (2016) would say, in the 'zone of not being' or as Sousa Santos (2014) would argue: an 'absent epistemology'. By English language teachers' knowledge, I not only refer to teachers' experiences, theories, beliefs, actions, and skills (Díaz-Maggioli, 2012) that teachers are supposed to embrace in order to teach well, but I also include the realm of the silenced, or invisibilized knowledges as seen within a Decolonial view. (See the work of Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Núñez-Pardo, 2020; Soto-Molina & Méndez, 2020; to expand on the Decolonial Turn in ELT in Colombia)

Literature Review

A Knowledge Base for English Teaching

I question the concept of knowledge base as being exclusively composed of linguistics, language theory, and practical components as methodology and practice (Richard, 1990) or more normatively speaking, as a base composed of "what teachers need to know and be able to do" (Díaz-Maggioli, 2012, p. 5). If the concept of knowledge base is traced back, one can get to see two genealogies in it. One is the cognitive root (Shulman, 1987) in the need of recognizing teaching as the status of a profession in the North American context in the early 1980s. Shulman (1987, 2005) found out some domains of knowledge which comprised, at least, a) general pedagogical knowledge, b) pedagogic content knowledge (how particular themes are appropriate for the students in terms of their diversity, interests, and skills), c) special professional comprehension of learners, groups, and classrooms, and d) educational ends, their philosophical and historical grounds.

The foundations of this set of knowledges are numerous, namely, the literature in each discipline, the institutionalized processes of knowledge production, and teacher's own wisdom gained through practice. Shulman (1987) maintains that teachers adapt understandings, skills, and attitudes into pedagogical representations. Teachers realize what is to be learned, and how knowledge should be taught. Shulman (1987)

did acknowledge that teachers' knowledge is much more than what has been described here, and he urged for a permanent re-interpretation of the aforementioned categories.

The literature in ELT education validates the concept of teacher knowledge base (Shulman, 1987) in international and local academies (see for example Pineda Báez 2002; Cárdenas & Suárez, 2009; Macías, 2013; Fandiño, 2013; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; König, et al., 2016; Freeman, 2019; Asl, Asl, & Asl, 2014; Mu, Liang, Lu, & Huang, 2018). In that way, the concept may have reached the status of a grand narrative in the field of ELT turning the idea of knowledge for teaching into an issue that appears to be solved, something that has no further perspective from which to analyze. Along with revision (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Johnson, 2006) and despite criticism (Yandell, 2017), the issue of 'knowledge base for teaching' has been a seminal contribution in ELT and general education. Still, as Shulman (1987) concluded, the knowledge for teaching needs continuous revision and reinterpretation.

The other genealogy of the concept of 'knowledge base' is found in computational sciences referring to systems that require a store of information to be retrieved, so that systems will work well. Extrapolating ideas of computational sciences to the ELT field, Freeman, Webre, and Epperson (2019), regarding the concept of 'knowledge base', state, "the information had to be accessible, which meant it had to be compatibly organized, so it could be searched and compiled according to the task at hand" (p. 6). They find similarities between this idea of storing in computational sciences, and how a knowledge base for teaching English works; hence, they describe the knowledge base for teaching as a "socio-professional storage system" (p. 6) that is bound to a specific type of work, time, and place. Such storage regenerates like an item of software because each new knowledge generation replaces a previous one, thereby solving shortcomings or adding new insights.

The first generation of knowledge in ELT answered the question what to teach and appeared to be highly influenced by Psychology and Linguistics. The second generation of knowledge focused on how to do the teaching, and thus pedagogy played a key role. The third generation, highly influenced by the work of Shulman regarding Pedagogical Content Knowledge, highlighted the role of teachers as knowledge holders of their context, classrooms, and students. The fourth generation is more geared towards conceptually reaching better students' learning. Thus, it has two dividing branches: subject matter (content, Applied Linguistics) and knowledge for teaching (language acquisition, methods, curriculum, assessment).

Twenty years after the first approach taken by Freeman and Johnson towards knowledge in 1998, the reengineered version of 2019 by Freeman, Webre, and Epperson acknowledges that the matters of positionality and authority carry weight when it comes to defining what knowledge is worth for teaching English. Freeman et al., (2019) concede that authorities in academic disciplines definitely "shape what is valued" (p. 7). They integrate the concept of identity now in this new version and acknowledge the connection pedagogy-identity. They further go on to mention

the criticism of how the privilege of race and social position structure disciplinary knowledge; however, they could have failed to fully integrate this proposal in a way that really brings up teachers' voices.

As a matter of concern, Freeman (2018) brought up the following question posed by Yep (2007), "What are the disciplinary, collective, and personal consequences when whiteness is the invisible and universal norm of the knowledge produced?" (Freeman, 2018, p. 7, citing Yep, 2007). The question foregrounds the need to inquire why The Global North³ epistemologies continue to dominate the discussion of what the knowledge for teaching must be. However, when analyzing what should constitute 'the knowledge base' for English Language Teaching, Freeman et al. (2019) reaffirm that there is a need to think of knowledge generations or "patterns to think of how knowledge has been understood" (p. 15), briefly outlined above and summarized as follows:

Table 1. Knowledge generations. Source: Freeman et al. (2019, p. 15)

Generation	Key issue	Versions in ELT
Disciplinary knowledge (<i>what</i>)	If this is <i>the knowledge needed to teach languages, how is the knowledge used?</i>	1.0: linguistics + psychology 1.1: + literatures 1.2: + sociology & anthropology
Knowledge of pedagogy (<i>how</i>)	If this is <i>how to teach languages, are differences in teaching deficits in knowledge evidence of individuality?</i>	2.0: + 'innovative methods' & SLA 2.1: + Communicative Language Teaching 2.2: + eclectic teaching; 'best methods'; 'post-method condition'
Knowledge-in-person; in-place (<i>who and where</i>)	If this is <i>how individuals use knowledge in teaching, if personal experience and context shape what they do, what do language teachers have in common?</i>	3.0: PPK & identity 3.1: PCK & transforming subject matter in teaching 3.2: knowledge as 'contextual, contingent, and developmental'
Knowledge-for-teaching (<i>why</i>)	If this is <i>how knowledge works in the process of teaching ...</i>	4.0: Knowledge-for-teaching languages 4.1: English-for-teaching

³ The concepts Global North and Global South, present along this document, are used as metaphors of the division between North America and Europe in respect to the rest of the world, concerning the geopolitical effect of globalization and capitalism created by Europe and North America in different regions of the planet including their impact in the way we conceptualize knowledge (Dados & Connell, 2012). As observed in the review, the bulk of research about teachers' knowledge base has been primarily framed within The Global North academies.

In 2006, Johnson had already brought up the idea that teachers' previous experiences mattered as much as their contexts. The author reflected that teachers' learning was a lifelong process as teachers participated in classrooms, educational programs, and other socially situated spaces in which they needed to socially negotiate their learning experiences. In fact, Johnson (2006) already recognized L2 teachers "as users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who make decisions about how to best teach their L2 students within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts" (p. 239). At that time, Johnson also proposed "positioning teachers' ways of knowing that lead to praxis as legitimate knowledge" (p. 241). However, what frequently happens is that teachers' knowledge as it is produced by them undergoes a process of codification or 'academization' to be heard in, for example, academic journals. Therefore, such knowledge gets lost in the words of the experts.

A Decolonial Move towards Understanding English Teachers' Knowledge

We could also understand knowledge as an experience lived the in the flesh (Anzaldúa 2000), that is, accompanied by instances of struggles, contradictions, challenges, and a fight for recognition of hidden epistemologies that may not align with scientific frames. There is a wealth of research related to the concept of knowledge base in the ELT field that does not stray from its modern epistemological root of conceiving knowledge as:

- a) Something passed from educators to teachers to be. (Deng, 2018)
- b) Objects stored in the mind and accumulation of facts.
- c) Theory to be practiced in the acts of learning and teaching. (Ord & Nutall, 2016)
- d) Knowledge generations that recycle themselves on and on. (Freeman et al., 2019)

As the concept of knowledge base has not overcome its modern epistemological root and has not been theorized with other lenses in ELT, there is a dearth of understanding as to how English language teachers experience their own relations to knowledge. The modern root of how we conceive of knowledge has not yet been overcome because there is still a widespread tendency of seeing knowledge as something that humans must grasp: knowledge appears to be awaited to be discovered. Also, there continuous to be a tendency to measure how much knowledge one has based on a priori evaluations, standardized testing, generic learning, and standardized curriculums. (Kincheloe, 2001). All these characteristics are constitutive of modernity and the will to dominate nature and humans in the name of the so-called progress. Drawing on Mignolo (2000), Global South peoples should reclaim the right to enunciate, and counter-story tell our cultural truths; therefore, there is need to explore how we experience our relations

to knowledge within geopolitically located bodies in the Global South. The reason is that the modern view of knowledge has separated the knowing subject from what is known, and emotional, historical, or sociological characteristics of the knowing subjects are not generally considered when conceptualizing knowledge.

Exploring the '*knowledge otherwise*' (Escobar, 2003; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) or "the possibility to craft another space for the production of knowledge" (Escobar, 2003, p. 52) helps us intervene in the discursive practices of our field and think of ELT education in other ways. Finding out new alternatives to conceptualize knowledge, Anzaldúa (2000) defines it as "an overarching theory of consciousness... that tries to encompass all the dimensions of life, both inner -mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, bodily realms—and outer-social, political, lived experiences" (p. 177). Escobar (2003) proposes, "the need to seriously consider the epistemological strength of local histories"⁴ (p. 61). Certainly, according to Doyle and Carter (2003), storying is a crucial way of human knowing, and teachers' storied lives tell us, particularly, of embedded understandings and knowledge gained through the repeated participation in teaching, learning and personal experience.

Research Question and Objective

Unveiling English teachers' knowledge within an epistemology of wholeness (that is with an approach to knowledge that recognizes our whole humanity in academic endeavors: mind, body, emotion) (Rendón, 2009) entails changing the questions we ask in research. Hence, I posed the question, how does a group of six English language teachers experience knowledge? The main objective with this research question is then to find out relations to knowledge and sources of *knowledge otherwise* in which teachers also draw on during the acts of teaching and learning.

Methodology

Using Testimonial Narratives to Trace English Teachers' Knowledges

Marín (1991) explains testimonial narrative as "a kind of writing from the margins about the, and to, the systems oppressing the speaking" (p. 51). Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, and Flores Carmona (2012) maintain that researchers are steadily applying testimonial narratives as a methodological approach, as data, and as pedagogy. Using

⁴ My own translation from Spanish.

these narratives challenges the disciplinary training given to scholars of generating unbiased knowledge. On the other hand, testimonial narratives question impartiality by situating the individual and the collective in tune with situated bodily, spiritual, cognitive, and communal production of knowledge. These authors contend that testimonial narratives can reach several audiences because they can be written, oral, or digital and they should be seen as “much like a gift” (p. 6) by the listener; the listener unfolds the intimate sense of those texts since learning about one person gives us insight into the life of many others.

Saavedra (2011) claims that testimonial narrative is a pioneering Latin American literary genre which helps narrators tell a shared account of dominance or harsh experiences through one person's narrative. In recent times, testimonial literature has been employed in educational sites as a research methodology and pedagogy (See for instance, Hamzeh & Flores Carmona, 2019). Testimonial data and methodology have been used in critical Latin studies of racist nativism and microaggressions (Pérez Huber, 2011) and in studies of embodied literacies and bilingualism (Saavedra, 2011; Passos DeNicolo & González, 2015). Likewise, testimonies have been used as a pedagogy to understand how to restore the mind-body-spirit in order to disrupt settler colonialism. Crafting these narratives has been recognized as a genuine methodological practice of knowledge production (Hamzeh & Flores Carmona 2019). Lately, authors such as Carvajal (2017) or Ramos (2017) have worked on Decolonial projects using testimonial data in doctoral dissertations concerning homelessness and youth migration, respectively.

The Process of Writing, Sharing and Co-interpreting Testimonial Narratives.

Inspired by Benmayor's (2012) contributions to methodology using testimonial data, I developed a path to individually write and communally interpret the testimonial narratives of six English teachers pursuing M.A. degrees in Applied Linguistics; these teachers narrated seminal, difficult yet memorable moments in their lives and reflected upon how such narrated events informed their teaching. Participants' own interpretations of the narratives did not follow any particular framework of analysis as spontaneity, dialogue, and intuition were favored. In my personal case, I had previously chosen to take a Decolonial perspective to study their ecologies of teachers' knowledge (Sousa Santos, 2004), and therefore, after having read the testimonial narratives several times myself and reading the work of Anzaldúa (2000), or Sousa Santos (2016, 2018), I focused on concepts such as ‘knowledge gotten in previous personal or social struggles’, ‘family epistemologies’, ‘geopolitical location of knowledge production’; I started subtly noticing these items in the testimonial narratives. On grounds of space, I will only approach the issue of knowledge as

experienced through emotion.

The university which offers this M.A. degree is a public university in Bogotá with a strong critical pedagogy component. Four men and two women with at least five years' experience teaching different learners comprised the group of participants. I took from Benmayor (2012) the idea of sharing formerly written testimonial narratives that could guide in the style of writing. Similarly, I followed her idea of read-aloud and communal interpretations. Communal interpretations are achieved by allowing participants to analyze what they listen to from other teachers' testimonial narratives based on their own experiences, emotions, and ideas. The narratives originated in the context of a second language acquisition class framed within a critical perspective that I guided. I asked participating teachers to reflect upon their experiences of teaching and how such experiences related with their own knowledge (i.e., their professional assets developed and accumulated through their careers such as skills, theoretical contents, insights, personal theories, etc.). I particularly asked teachers to focus on those experiences that had been challenging and/or memorable.

As part of the content, I introduced the participants to the testimony genre and some examples from Chicana Latina Life Stories (see Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Burciaga & Tavares, 2006; Benmayor, 2012) were examined to analyze the potential of this type of writing/speaking. The participating teachers left the class sessions with a question that would help them examine their memories, their classes, and their past experiences intending to delve into their knowledges. For example, teachers were asked: What have been some of the most difficult experiences as an English teacher for you? How did you experience that? How do you link it with language pedagogy?

Teachers were encouraged to write or record some preliminary ideas and exchange them with the other participants in following sessions to dialogically help each teacher in the recalling exercise of bringing to the consciousness past episodes. Teachers were asked to decide how they wanted to introduce their testimonial narratives (oral or written). Participants took at least 3 weeks to produce their own testimonial narrative. Once the texts were ready, participating teachers narrated or read aloud their testimonies to *collectively theorize/interpret* (following Benmayor's (2012) words) each story. Finally, such communal interpretations were recorded and sent to each participating teacher for having time to listen to their narratives again, refine their text, and write their theorizations or personal reflections.

The act of verbally sharing one's own experiences with the other participants (i.e., giving testimony) goes in hand with one of the tenets of the *Epistemologies of the South* in which knowing with others is favored instead of knowing about others (Sousa Santos, 2018). In a similar vein, there is a re-conceptualization of what listening entails. Sousa Santos (2018) asserts that "the Western culture privileges writing and speech to the detriment of listening" (p. 175). The idea with listening to the testimonial narratives of other teachers is that a dialogic connection can be

founded, and each contributor can enrich the reading-aloud testimonies. Hence, there is a first layer of interpretation and communal co-construction of knowledge by means of ‘deep listening’ and engagement. As well, there is also an explicit effort to favor the “oralization of written knowledge” (Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 186) considering that scientific knowledge does not encourage oralization because it is susceptible to imprecision. However, following Sousa Santos (2018) in the *Epistemologies of the South*, oralization is favored because it allows for a unique degree of personalization in knowledge construction. The practices engaged in the oralization of knowledge invite the use of vernacular language, dialogic relations, and narrative as a substitute of explanation (Sousa Santos, 2018).

One category of knowledge experience is emotion as it will be evidenced by analyzing the next testimonial narrative through its communal interpretation, and participant’s theorization. The text was written and shared by Lorena⁵, an English teacher who worked in a catholic school by the time she participated in the study. This section will show verbatim her ideas and her colleagues’ own personal interpretations. Afterwards, I will also provide my own Decolonial lens to the narrated episode.

Lorena’s Testimonial Narrative: “Teachers don’t cry”

“The following testimony gives an account of one experience that made me evaluate my role as a teacher. It describes a particular situation I lived with eleven graders. I have been their English teacher for 4 years: when they were in sixth, seventh, tenth, and now in eleventh grade. From my perspective, they have changed their behavior as most teenagers do. I have seen them grow, and they have seen me too. Our relationship has also grown framed into the catholic values of the school, the academic goals we must meet together, and the affection that goes beyond teacher-student relation. Most of the teachers complain about their attitudes and academic skills. Even me in some cases. They are characterized in the school for not being so committed with their responsibilities, for not following the rules, and for challenging the guidelines. However, they are also recognized for being creative and animated teens...

As usual, I got into the classroom at eleven forty to teach my thirty eleventh graders. It was a warm busy morning as the term was finishing (that means a lot of work for them and for teachers). When I got into the classroom, they remained standing up, speaking, eating, and bothering. I had to ask them to organize themselves. I set the attendance, told them what we were going to do on that session, and asked them to open their notebooks to write the date and lesson plan, as the school demands. Some of them followed me, some of them did not. I started teaching them alternative ways

⁵ The names of participants are real not to erase the sources of knowledge.

for using the future tenses. I gave them some examples and explained them how to use them in real situations. While I was speaking some of them were paying attention, and some others were eating, chatting, and even painting their hair with markers. However, I continued speaking pretending everything was okay. Suddenly, one of the students laughed aloud. I walked towards my desk, sat down, and started working on my things. I felt terrible. I felt frustrated. I felt angry. I felt hopeless. I don't know why that day I lost temper... I remained quiet while they continued in mess. One of them silenced them all. Some of them laughed at her, and she insistently called to order. Unexpectedly for me and for them, I started crying. They stayed completely still looking at me while I started speaking. I remember some of the words I said: "Are you serious? I can't believe your attitude. Don't you notice I am here with you? Do I have to start crying so you listen to me? What a lack of respect from you. I think I am always willing to listen to you: if you are sick, if you want to go to the restroom, or even if you don't want to be in my class. I treat you not like students but like human beings. Is it difficult for you to do the same? I am too disappointed. You are nothing of what I remember you used to be. I don't care if you then laugh at me, and everybody in the school knows I cried because of you. I don't care if you learn perfect English. I do care about you as a human being, as persons who I share a lot of my time even more than with my son. Are you going to treat your future family, colleagues, or employees this way? If so, you will suffer and will become horrible people". Those words are just a brief description of what I entirely said. Surprisingly, they did not make fun of me. They seemed to feel ashamed. One student, one of the most displeasing ones, said she or they were sorry about the situation.

Figure 1. Testimonial narrative illustrated by artist Felipe Camargo Rojas.



What is interesting for me about this testimony comes later. The class was over, and I went to the school restaurant to have lunch. Some of my colleagues at the table noticed I was crying. They asked me why. I described what had happened. Some of them said I had made a mistake when crying in front my students. They said words like “you lost the authority”, “why don’t you complain with the director”, “don’t worry, they are leaving in a couple of weeks”, and they looked at me with a shamed gaze. Immediately I responded to those comments: “Beliefs like those are the ones that shape such students’ behaviors. If we as teachers do not allow ourselves to cry in front of our students, we are denying ourselves as beings, as real people. People like them. The day we change that concept of authority, those students’ attitudes will change too. Probably my class was boring, and they were not engaged” My colleagues kept having lunch without replying my comment.

Some days later the classes went better. My students seemed to be listening to me, participating in my class more actively, still bothering but respectfully. What was more interesting even, was a talk I had with some students from that class. They said some words like: ... “Lately our attitudes towards school and teachers are annoying. We don’t care about anything here. We want to leave now. And everybody knows it here, so we are annoying and teachers too. Every class is the same. We don’t care nor the teachers. But when you cried, you showed us that we mean something for you; that was shocking. You opened our eyes. That day we realized that we were crossing the line. But the problem is that it is not common to find teachers like you. The majority of them just stand up in front of us and say: “you just have to care about learning. That is why you are here. Be quiet and write.” That is maybe the reason why we behave that way. You showed us that you are just the same like us. If you had got mad at us, we would have kept the same attitude. But that time it was different. When you cried, you treated us as humans, not as students who follow instructions.”

Something has changed since that day. We are not the same people in that class.”

What follows is an excerpt of co-intepretation in this testimonial narrative through conversation with Javier, Josué, Nancy, Andrés, and Alejandra who are some of the other English teachers, involved in the project. The dialogue took place once Lorena finished reading her testimonial narrative spiced up with background music brought by her to the read-aloud session. Issues of teachers’ power and intended ruptures with the status quo are mentioned.

Javier: There’s one thing which is what the school represents not just in terms of the utopic thing, you know? the educational place where every human being gets to flourish, but the status quo of the place where people get... or as Michel Foucault says, become objects. Somebody could argue that probably students were showing agency, resisting the system itself because, in a certain way, that day you represented power for them... Some situations in which they are, they don’t agree. Somehow you broke this stereotype of the teacher as “the super

person” or the-know-it-all; they really saw they were in touch with a person: that is something I found valuable, seriously.

Lorena: Yes, they are eleventh graders; they are about to leave [the school], and they have had a terrible year, but I think it is because of the school, yeah? Because they are nice people. The way they behave this year, it is just because of the way the school behaves. For example, el retiro de once* [eleventh graders trip] is one of the most important things for eleventh graders, and the school didn't do it with them. It's because of their behavior. They are in constant... fight.

Javier: Tension.

Lorena: Things are not that way. I've known them since they were in sixth grade. I know they are great people. The context in the school has made them behave that way, and some teachers don't see it...

Javier: That's our reality.

Josué: I agree with Javier. I think that maybe oftentimes teachers become the invigilators of processes that students carry out in the classroom, and that is basically what some authors have referred to in the studies of surveillance at schools. In Colombia, for example, Saldarriaga, Alvarez in Spain, Julio Varela, who unveil the connotation of schools where students are controlled, controlling their time, and controlling their space, and the first entity we can call that way is school, that makes sure students do what they are supposed to do, then what you did certainly broke that rule established at school... I think that this experience allowed you to see the other side of the coin in which students really care and pay attention to our classes. We just take it personal: “they don't like my class”, but it is analyzing non-linguistic behaviors, things that we do that are not... clear to us what helps us.

Javier: ...Also, students have an identity in which they need to position themselves in terms of, for example, “the cool guy”, the one who talks to women, and academic things are not the most important.... Something you could probably understand: How is this image that we want to project to others? sometimes we harm others in the process...which is something that probably can happen. I am not saying that they don't like to learn, but it's something.

Nancy: It is interesting, how you, Lorena in this part when you say: “I asked them to open their notebooks and write the date and lesson plan, the school demands”. Sometimes, as Javier told you, they are... standardized. They must do the same thing, the same routine, even knowing that we are very creative. I worked in a Catholic school; that is why I understand perfectly this kind of attitudes. They are teenagers. Our behavior makes people change. It is not

only that we are human beings; it is that we are influenced by those cultural behaviors. When the teachers told you that you had lost the authority...yes, I had a similar situation and my colleagues told me: “if you cry, it is like the worst thing.”

Adriana: I have a question for everybody regarding Lorena's story... what knowledge emerged in that situation because it is not the typical disciplinary or pedagogical knowledge?... if any.

Andrés: To perform as a teacher the way you understand it. What you promote, that is your discourse... I could cry.

Josué: Humanizing the teacher, knowledge of the self.

Alejandra: And, of the students, because she thought they were going to make fun of her, and they didn't.

Communal Meaning Making Themes: Humanizing the teacher

In this section, I will briefly summarize what was concluded in the dialogue among teachers. This communal interpretation is meant to disrupt the Western view that researchers are the only ones who should interpret the 'data'. Javier reflected upon the double-edged nature of the school system: control and flourishing. He analyzes how Lorena, the teacher, who is invested with institutional power, feels challenged by the teens she has cherished for five years. He also analyzes that the school represents the place in which teens are to exercise agency against the power the teacher represents. Lorena herself studies closely her situation adding a new interpretation which relates to the role of the institution in prompting said students' behavior. When suggesting that it is the context which has an impact on students' ways of acting, she acknowledges that students' ways of being at school are also triggered by certain symbolic violence exercised upon students by the school as observed in actions like not taking them on the end-of-the-year school trip.

More specifically, Josué defines the happening as an instance of surveillance that is intersected with an act of courage performed by Lorena. He highlights how Lorena moves from being an invigilator to showing students her deepest feelings, frustrations, and thoughts. Josué himself reflects upon how the experience Lorena shared is an opportunity to see that students care when really touched by teachers' actions and words. Javier adds a new interpretation towards Lorena's students related to how other identities intersect students' actions when reacting in class. Some of them want to perform the roles of the 'cool guy' or the womanizer, and academic identities are left aside. The least thing some teens would like is to appear as devoted students.

On the other hand, Nancy raises the practice of standardization that cuts creativity. Both teachers and students are influenced by cultural models about things such as authority and classroom routines that end up changing our ways of being, behaving, and talking. Similarly, Nancy points to having had a similar experience in which she was also advised not to cry in front of her students as she could lose her authority too. All in all, when asked what shape of knowledge had emerged, Josué and Alejandra suggested that knowledge of the self and knowledge of students.

A Teacher Who Is Challenging Normalized Practices

How does Lorena experience knowledge? Lorena's own reflections

Lorena's theorization of what happened in her classroom is a powerful tool to be able to understand her from a Decolonial perspective in which "un diálogo de saberes" (a knowledges dialogue) is always required. Lorena points out the need for a true dialogue with students in which both truly want to hear each other. Surprisingly, a true dialogue with students really came when the teacher's voice was not being heard because she was, as Anzaldúa (2009) would say, "speaking in tongues" not intelligible to students, not because she couldn't communicate, but because the message conveyed was intersected by power devices that harmed the students and in turn their relationships with Lorena as a teacher. It is Lorena's humanity and courage that breaks the molds and fosters real conversation. She says:

"My testimony is the result of several years of observing certain school dynamics... From my perspective, school dynamics convey some power practices behind. School practices portray a hidden discourse of school, and teachers as discipliners and knowledge holders. Hidden discourses also serve to bigger structures we belong to. School, teachers, and even students have normalized such practices.

Crying in front of my students represents a desire of breaking stereotypes of an authoritarian teacher. It embodies a teacher who is challenging the normalized practices within the classroom. Through the words I said to my student during the episode, I read a desire of having my students understand that they are a very important piece of their education, that teachers and learners are equal, that they are expected to respect not because I am the authority but just because we all are humans.

Through this testimony, I explored how I listened to my students' voices and how they listened to mine. In addition, this reciprocal dialogue in which we opened the opportunity of talking about what has been silenced in education, shaped our imaginaries on what being a teacher and a learner need to become. Freire (1998) states: "It is through hearing the learners, a task unacceptable to authoritarian educators, that democratic teachers increasingly prepare

themselves to be heard by learners. But by listening to and so learning to talk with learners, democratic teachers teach the learners to listen to them as well” (p. 65). My students had the chance of reflecting upon their position in the school, in my classroom, and in the world. I also had the chance of exerting agency. Agency that will allow a fairer vision of education: an education that balances the concepts of knowledge and emotion... I grant my class as a *language* class and not as an instructional set of procedures. My class is an opportunity of acknowledging language as a right, as a means of identity construction”. (Lorena’s theorization of her testimonial narrative)

Bodies of Knowledge, Bodies of Emotion, Knowledge of the self

How does Lorena experience knowledge? My own reflections

Lorena’s experience of knowledge is intersected with feelings, emotions, and a vision of emancipatory education through dialogue and reading the world. Lorena differentiates the hidden discourse of teachers as “discipliners and knowledge holders” from that of the teacher who abandons authoritarian practices and draws on emotion to create a rupture of what is expected from knowledgeable teachers: teaching by the book and abiding by the rules. Lorena relied on her emotions to conceive of experience and therefore knowledge. But this reliance would not have been possible without what the Epistemologies of the South call “deep listening”. Sousa Santos (2018) explains that the Western world “privileges writing and speech to the detriment of listening... hearing is the superficial use of one’s ear, while listening implies an act of will” (p. 175). Lorena’s cry showed how deep listening was fostered among learners who are oftentimes taught not to listen deeply.

As a teacher-researcher engaged with a Decolonial perspective I align with Diversi & Moreira (2009) when “refusing to erase the flesh from the study of humans” because “humans...experience the world through a very specific physical location: their bodies...bodies are physical, psychological, social, cultural, and political, all at once always.” (p. 32). Lorena is a body that cries. Sousa Santos (2018) concurs that “bodies are unequal because they feel and are felt in ways that reproduce social inequalities, and the opportunities to feel and be felt are unequally distributed” (p.169). This idea explains why Lorena’s colleagues did not agree with her sudden outburst of emotion as shown to students. Teachers are expected to handle their emotions, have at hand a solution for everything, and are simultaneously compelled to hide any emotional constraint because they could appear weak or powerless in front of learners.

Interestingly, as pointed out in the communal interpretation of this testimonial narrative, a certain knowledge of the self, and of learners, was also cultivated in the whole situation Lorena faced. Here knowledge of learners is not meant as in previous research of teacher's knowledge as related to learners' level, methodology to keep them busy, or even knowledge of learners' developmental behavior for their age. No, here knowledge of the self refers to being able to read the context clues to have a response in the flesh and blood to cope with a complex teaching situation.

The experience Lorena faced can also be explained following Gallagher-Geurtsen's (2012) study of youths' testimonial narratives in neocolonial classrooms. This author highlights that teens "rage against a curriculum created to normalize students' actions, knowledge, beliefs, and lives" (p. 7). Gallagher-Geurtsen (2012, p. 7) argues that neocolonial classrooms develop:

"...a "logo-scientific curriculum (e.g., narrow, objective-driven lessons); universalism (e.g., the same standards and curriculum are appropriate for all groups of people) ... Schools must assure that this multimodal system remains intact through observation. Observation or surveillance is among the most potent tools of colonization and, indeed, schooling. Constantly observing students with the expectation that they "do school" appropriately".

Gallagher-Geurtsen (2012) suggests that students frequently undergo processes of "conversion" in which they "act the part of the "good student" ...and conversion can be promoted by school staff with forms of coercion and disapproval when youth stray from the accepted norms and actions that constitute the official "good students" (p. 8). Actions described by Lorena such as "setting the attendance", "writing the date and lesson plan... as the school demands" or students' accounts of their teachers saying that: "the majority of them [the teachers] say: "You just have to care about learning. That is why you are here. Be quiet and write," show us different levels of coloniality of knowledge and being that destroy a seminal healthy relationship: that of the learner and the teacher. As a matter of fact, teaching is an unquestionably emotional profession in which a big amount of energy is used, and constantly our knowledge of ourselves and others, the students, are constantly reconfigured. While getting to know ourselves and getting to knowing our students, intricate societal issues are at stake. For instance, "unequal power relations impact teachers' emotions at multiple levels, which include the classroom (micro-level), school (meso-level) and society (macro-level)" (p. 93). Probably here, Lorena could have also experienced a case of emotional burnout that left an imprint in her knowledge of teaching. De Costa et al., (2018) highlight that teachers experience emotional burnout related to the absence of value and respect assigned to the teaching profession.

Discussion and Conclusions

There are multiple ways in which teachers experience knowledge; one of them is through emotion. Knowledge is a completely emotional and corporeal activity as revealed in Lorena's testimonial narrative. Authors such as White (2018) and Martínez Agudo (2018) have documented the neglect that emotions have undergone in the ELT field. Some reasons for such disregard of the emotional component of teaching as an area of exploration are that first, historically, emotions have been treated as irrational, subjective, or feminine. Second, there has been an overprivileged emphasis on reason. Third, the incipient research around emotions revolved around sociopsychological issues of learning such as the affective filter or the affective strategies for language learning. Still, teaching is essentially an emotional endeavor, and it bears a "sociopolitical dimension" (De Costa, Rawal, & Li, 2019, p. 93) that should be analyzed under a more critical lens. Fourth, the connection emotion-cognition was only recognized to back up cognition and not as a full explanation of how people experience the world. A pioneering work such as the one by Zembylas (2007) outside the ELT field discusses the two tendencies that the study of emotions has had: awareness of emotions in teaching and understanding of the social construction of emotion in the transactions of teaching and learning. Yet, Zembylas (2005) acknowledges that within our culture there is the belief that "emotions threaten the disembodied, detached, and neutral knower." (p. 7). If that neglect happens with emotions, much more happens with the body; a connection between body and knowledge is practically absent in ELT, except for a few mentions such as that of Nelson (2011), who brilliantly summarized that "the body is both a site of knowledge and an instrument of knowing" (p. 472).

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Using Digital Formative Assessment to Evaluate EFL Learners' English Speaking Skills¹

Uso de la evaluación formativa digital para evaluar las habilidades de habla inglesa de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera

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Abstract

As it is known formative assessment focuses on both learning process and learner's performance. In this study, digital formative assessment and traditional speaking tests were utilized comparatively to evaluate 52 upper-intermediate EFL learners' English language speaking skills. The study was designed as a mixed-method. The quantitative data were collected via achievement tests which had been administered both in traditional speaking tests and digital formative tests. The qualitative findings were collected with students' interviews which consisted of four open-ended questions. The results of the study showed that participants outperformed in digital formative tests in comparison to traditional speaking tests. Another significant finding of the study is that participants are satisfied with the digital formative assessments in terms of peer collaboration during tests, enriched test materials, and preparation time for the speaking test. Although they have positive views on digital formative assessment, participants are dissatisfied with it in terms of technical problems that they encountered during the administration of digital formative tests.

Keywords: Digital formative assessment, foreign language speaking skills, formative assessment, language testing.

Resumen

Como se conoce, la evaluación formativa se enfoca tanto en el proceso de aprendizaje como en el desempeño del estudiante. En este estudio, la evaluación formativa digital y las pruebas tradicionales orales se usaron comparativamente para evaluar a 52 estudiantes de inglés en nivel intermedio superior en la habilidad de habla. El estudio se diseñó como un método mixto. Los datos cuantitativos se recolectaron por medio de pruebas de logros las cuales se habían administrado tanto en pruebas tradicionales orales como en pruebas formativas digitales. Los datos cualitativos se recolectaron por medio de entrevistas a los estudiantes que consistían en cuatro preguntas abiertas. Los resultados del estudio mostraron que los participantes superaron las pruebas formativas digitales en comparación con las pruebas tradicionales. Otro resultado significativo es que los participantes estaban satisfechos con las evaluaciones formativas digitales en términos de colaboración entre compañeros durante las pruebas, materiales de prueba enriquecidos y tiempo de preparación para las pruebas orales. Aunque han tenido opiniones positivas sobre la evaluación formativa digital, los participantes están insatisfechos con dicha prueba en términos de los problemas técnicos que se han encontrado durante la administración de estas.

Palabras clave: evaluación formativa digital; habilidades para hablar un idioma extranjero; evaluación formativa; prueba de idiomas.

Resumo

Como se conhece, a avaliação formativa se enfoca tanto no processo de aprendizagem como no desempenho do estudante. Neste estudo, a avaliação formativa digital e as provas tradicionais orais se usaram comparativamente para avaliar a 52 estudantes de inglês em nível intermédio superior na habilidade de fala. O estudo se desenhou como um método misto. Os dados quantitativos se recolheram por meio de provas de aproveitamentos as quais se tinham administrado tanto em provas tradicionais orais como em provas formativas digitais. Os dados qualitativos se coletaram por meio de entrevistas aos estudantes que consistiam em quatro perguntas abertas. Os resultados do estudo mostraram que os participantes superaram as provas formativas digitais em comparação com as provas tradicionais. Outro resultado significativo é que os participantes estavam satisfeitos com as avaliações formativas digitais em termos de colaboração entre colegas durante as provas, materiais de prova enriquecidos e tempo de preparação para as provas orais. Mesmo que tiveram opiniões positivas sobre a avaliação formativa digital, os participantes estão insatisfeitos com mencionada prova em termos dos problemas técnicos que se encontraram durante a administração destas.

Palavras chave: avaliação formativa digital; habilidades para falar um idioma estrangeiro; avaliação formativa; prova de idiomas.

Introduction

Assessing the oral production of foreign language learners has become one of the main concerns of scholars in the 20th century (Celce-Murcia, 2013). Language skills assessment plays a very crucial role in the learning process but it turns out that changing or reforming assessment is quite difficult. However, in our changing and developing world cultural, theoretical, technological development and changes make reform a necessity in assessment. Thus, these changes affect both teaching and learning as well.

Foreign language speaking skills assessment is perceived as an active process that demonstrates whether language learners have learned what had been taught, and if not, what can be done to solve the problem (William, 2007). There is a direct link between assessment and learning that has been realized by scholars (Boz & Boz, 2005). Assessment studies have begun to shift away from investigating restricted test types to other techniques such as formative assessment, dynamic assessment, digital formative assessment, classroom assessment, etc. Thus, the former test types generally make little contribution to language learners' learning during the assessment and include strict components that cause stress and anxiety during the speaking skills assessment (Knight, 1992). However, alternative assessment types such as formative assessment or dynamic assessment consist of scaffolding, peer collaboration, teacher's mediation, and a more relaxing atmosphere for language learners to perform their skills. In this respect, assessment and learning are highly related to each other, and such assessment techniques should be used to make both learners and teachers benefit from these techniques (Boz & Boz, 2005).

Changing and transforming educational technologies make innovative assessment techniques a must in our developing world. For this reason, the present research seeks to unveil different aspects related to the assessment of foreign language speaking skills. It tries to find out whether the digital formative assessment is more effective than traditional speaking tests to evaluate and improve language learners' foreign language speaking skills. Additionally, the current research tries to figure out upper-intermediate language learners' perspectives towards digital formative assessment type which is quite new for them.

The present research study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between test scores of upper-intermediate EFL learners' speaking skills in traditional speaking tests and digital formative tests?
2. What conceptions do the upper-intermediate EFL learners enrolled at a state university, Turkey have on digital formative assessment of speaking skills?

Related Literature

As it was mentioned before, assessment has a big impact on students' learning, and generally, students spend their time on the materials that are covered in the assessment part. In other words, assessment directly affects their learning (Baleni, 2015; Leung, 2005; Leung & Mohan, 2004; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). The important point to be considered is whether the assessment should be for learning or assessment of learning. The distinction between formative or summative assessment is that summative assessment heavily focuses on what students have learned, in other words outputs of the learning process but formative assessment emphasizes the learning process rather than the learning product by providing feedback (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). The distinction between these two different assessment types is perceived as two different poles of a continuum (Capel et al., 1995) that summative assessment serves the educational system's needs and it has a bureaucratic purpose. On the other hand, the formative assessment supports learners' future learning by providing meaningful and constructive feedback. The present research paper focuses mainly on formative assessment and its more recent version of digital formative assessment. Another distinction between formative assessment and summative assessment is that purpose and timing differ in these two assessment types. Formative assessment is used to assess learners' positive achievements during the learning process and by giving feedback learners are prepared for a further step of learning. On the other hand, summative assessment is used to record the overall achievement or performance of learners in a systematic way (TGAT, 1988). One of the main differences is that formative assessment provides more chances to compensate for learning deficiencies during the learning process. Formative assessment is defined as an assessment type that includes quizzes, homework, questions, etc. during instruction to provide direction for future learning of learners (O'Connor, 2002). Main concerns of formative assessment; it serves to maximize students' future learning possibilities, develops students' motivation and learning opportunities, and uses assessment as an actual part of the learning process (Boz & Boz, 2005; McMillan, 2014). Teachers should follow some main approaches to achieve the goals of formative assessment. It is clear that formative assessment includes highly effective steps to reach the goals. Questioning provides critical thinking and active construction of knowledge if students try to find out answers by researching and asking further questions. Providing feedback makes students understand their mistakes and shows the correct information. As the third step, peer- and self-assessment serve as reflective parts of formative assessment. In the last step, formative use of summative tests provides a continuous assessment cycle and by doing so both students and teachers can see the missing pieces of information in the learning process. Therefore, formative assessment should be cyclical and continuous to make learners more active during the learning process (Wood, 2010). Formative assessment should include an assessment of students' behaviour and learning process and feedback which are quite effective to recover deficiencies in learning. Wood (2010) mentions that learners are active in learning process and learning environment is

challenging for both learners and teachers. However, the formative assessment fosters permanent learning and contributes to the future learning of learners. In this respect, its contribution to the learning process and effectiveness is quite obvious. Particularly, with the help of formative assessment teachers can check learners' understanding and help them to make up for lacking knowledge (Dirksen, 2011). Formative assessment can be planned or interactive; the planned formative assessment provides evidence with a diagnostic purpose but interactive formative assessment is more spontaneous (Bell & Cowie, 2001).

It is possible to see that both summative assessment and formative assessment are used to test foreign language learners' language skills and their development in various skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, related research indicates that generally summative assessment is used to measure students' overall achievement in language skills (Stanca, et al. 2015). However, with the advent of technologies and students' increasing demands and readiness towards changes in educational and assessment tools make new assessment types a must. Foreign language speaking skills assessment involves multiple activities and various tasks (Luoma, 2004) and speaking skills assessment should measure language ability or the use of language rather than students' knowledge about the topic if the language test does not have a specific purpose (Huang, Hung & Plakans, 2018). Speaking skills as a part of pragmatic knowledge represent communication ability, knowledge related to language use in practice, and appropriate use of target language in an appropriate context such as functional and sociolinguistic knowledge (Luoma, 2004). In such an assessment environment, students, assessor(s), tools, or tasks for assessment and rubric exist in an interrelated way. It was discussed previously that formative assessment provides many opportunities to students in many ways and its usage to test foreign language speaking skills contributes respectively more than summative assessment. Thus, foreign language speaking assessment and tests are perceived as stressful and anxiety increasing moments by foreign language learners (Çetin Koroğlu, 2019). However, if the formative assessment is administered to test foreign language learners, both their speaking skills are tested and their improvement in foreign language speaking skills is enhanced. The digital formative assessment is quite a new term for speaking assessment and there is very limited research on this term (Faber, Luyten & Visscher, 2017). There is only one research about it which is carried out by Fabet et. al. (2017). The results of their study show that the digital formative assessment tool has positive effects on student achievement and motivation. Additionally, students' use measurements support students' achievement and motivation. One more important finding of the study is that achievement effects were higher for high-performing students. In this respect, there is a big gap both in the definition, application, and research area of digital formative assessment.

The term can be defined as the use of formative assessment through digital platforms and steps to foster students' learning by assessment. Various tools can be

used to carry out the digital formative assessment, specific to the current research; speaking skills can be assessed through digital chats, recordings of students' speaking performance, or video scripts commentary which represent authentic language use in a context (Jamieson, 2005). Additionally, using such tasks provides teachers and researchers the opportunity to better understanding students' speaking skills development and trace test-takers (Dhalhoub-Deville, 2001). Moreover, such tasks can be used effectively nearly at all levels of language learners because children are called as digital natives nowadays (Dingli, & Seychell, 2015). Some researchers discuss that using e-portfolios is an effective way to assess language learners' speaking skills development (Cepik & Yastibas, 2013). Gray (2008) states that using e-portfolios provides evidence, reflections, and feedback about learners' abilities. In addition to these, useful websites can be used to carry out digital formative assessments such as flipgrid. The website presents a video discussion program and teachers can insert any video which they want to the website. They can ask questions and students respond to the questions. Seesaw and voicethread can be used as well because these websites have similar features with flipgrid. Performance tests and authentic assessments allow students to speak and perform in a real-life context that is crucial in the communicative language (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Similarly, digital formative assessment provides authentic tasks and rich content during assessment phases and divides it into steps that decrease students' speaking anxiety and stress. Moreover, digital formative assessment supports instruction by focusing on students' performances and learning rather than their overall achievement. Even though developing technologies offer a range of digital assessment tools, only a little portion of teachers are eager to use them. This can be a result of difficulties and hardship when teachers use digital assessment tools (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). However, utilizing these tools modify and evolve foreign language speaking skills by chipping in and enhancing students' learning while they are assessed. Additionally, the digital formative assessment draws students' attention to different contexts and tools instead of text anxiety.

Methodology

The current research study aims to provide both qualitative and quantitative examination of the upper- intermediate EFL learners who study at a state university, Turkey. The study was designed as a mixed-method study to investigate participants' speaking skills performance. To this end, it presents digital formative tests' impact on EFL learners' speaking skills development in comparison to traditional speaking tests and participants' perceptions towards digital formative assessment and its usage in a speaking skills evaluation.

Research Participants

The participants for this research were enrolled in foreign language teaching department of a state university, Turkey. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling. Their age varied between 18 to 21 years old. The total number of participants included in this study is fifty-two. Participants consisted of 16 male and 36 female students. The participants were first-graders of the department and they are student teachers of English. Participants nearly have a similar speaking skills performance which is presumed due to their speaking skills test scores of preparatory classes of the department. The research was carried out in Oral Communication Skills I and II during an academic year, 2019- 2020.

Data Collection Instrument

The present study relied on two traditional speaking assessment tests and two digital formative assessments which were evaluated through speaking skills assessment rubrics and a written structured interview. The rubric included five domains which were fluency, accuracy, grammatical structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The rubric was used to grade participants' speaking skills performance in both test types. The written structured interview consisted of four open-ended questions that aimed to find out participants' perceptions towards digital formative test administration in terms of its effectiveness.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the administration of both traditional speaking tests and digital formative tests, students' speaking skills achievement scores of the preparatory class were examined and concluded that they have nearly the same level of speaking skills in English. As the first test phase, the traditional speaking test was administered to all participants. In traditional tests, ten different topics such as globalization, nature, friendship, hobbies, etc. were selected and these themes were written on a piece of paper and each topic was put in an envelope. Students were called one by one to test the office and they selected one of the envelopes and thought for five minutes about the theme. Then each student was expected to speak about the theme nearly for five to ten minutes. Two test administrators applied the traditional speaking test and graded each student's speaking performance. The second test phase was carried out with the same procedure as the traditional speaking test after three months. The third test phase was carried out as a digital formative assessment which was quite different than the traditional speaking test. The researcher of the study utilized Edmodo as a learning management system to administer the test. Before the test was administered, four

videos were uploaded to Edmodo. Vocabulary charts were prepared and uploaded for each video too. Students had two hours to prepare their speech about the videos. They were expected to select one of them and to record a video of their own while they were talking on the material. Various tasks were introduced to students before the test administration such as role-play, interview, group discussion, etc. Additionally, students were free to talk individually or in a group. After they recorded their videos, they were expected to deliver their videos to the researcher through Edmodo, Google drive, and Whatsapp. The fourth test phase was administered as the same as the third test phase. Students were free to select videos from the used LMS, in current research which was Edmodo. Additionally, they were free to select a task and perform individually or in a group. They recorded their speaking performance and then sent to the researcher. At the end of the fourth phase, the written structured interview was administered to the participants of the study. Participants participated in the study voluntarily and their names were kept anonymous for confidential reasons.

Test Types			
Test 1 Traditional speaking skills test	Test 2 Traditional speaking skills test	Test 3 Digital formative speaking skills test	Test 4 Digital formative speaking skills test

Data Analysis Method

Students' test scores were calculated and the mean score was presented for each test. The quantitative data helped in the interpretation and discussion of the two different speaking tests' effectiveness in terms of student achievement. The written structured interview questions were analysed through content analysis. For each question, various themes and codes were created and discussed within the light of related literature. Thematic analysis was adopted to extract the theme from the written interviews. That is, the themes were emerged from the data of the research instead of imposing predetermined themes on the data, so the inductive approach was adopted (Charmaz, 2006).

Findings

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative findings of the four test phases are presented through the table which is placed below. Analysis of findings reveals that participants have similar test scores in test 1 and test 2. Their average score in test one is 61.25 and in test 2 score is 63.50. As it was mentioned in test three and test four digital, formative tests were administered with a different procedure than the traditional speaking tests. The average score for

test three is 84.50 which is quite higher than the test two. Additionally, in test four participants' average test score is higher than test three, which shows participants experienced a novel speaking skills assessment type and succeeded in terms of academic achievement.

Table 1. The average score of traditional speaking skills tests and digital formative speaking tests.

	Participants' number	Test 1 traditional speaking skills test	Test 2 traditional speaking skills test	Test 3 Digital formative speaking skills test	Test 4 Digital formative speaking skills test
Average test score of participants	60	61.25	63.50	84.50	86.50

Participants speaking performances were graded through an analytic rubric which included fluency, accuracy, grammatical structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary dimensions. Hence, analytic rubrics offer detailed, focused, and precise assessment by covering various aspects of oral performance (Mertler, 2001). Participants' average score for each dimension is provided through the table below.

Table 2. Participants' average test scores due to sub-dimensions.

	Test 1 traditional speaking skills test	Test 2 traditional speaking skills test	Test 3 Digital formative speaking skills test	Test 4 Digital formative speaking skills test
Fluency	11,25	11,7	19,11	21,6
Accuracy	13,25	13,9	15,7	17,3
Grammatical Structure	11,50	10,9	14,5	12,3
Pronunciation	12,50	13,2	13,3	13,3
Vocabulary	13,25	13,8	19,9	21,0

It is indicated in table 2 that participants nearly had the same result in fluency dimension in test 1 and test 2 phases. Their average score is 11.25 % and 11.7 %. The result of fluency dimension relatively increased in test 3 and test 4 as 19.11 % and 21.6 % in digital formative tests, which can be interpreted participants spoke more fluently in digital formative tests. When the accuracy dimension's test scores are examined, a gradual increase can be seen in table 2. As it is known traditional speaking test doesn't provide material during the speaking performance but digital formative test provides students with prepared materials, background information, necessary vocabularies, and preparation time. In this respect, students may have a chance to prepare their speech for the test. As it is presented in table 2, participants got the highest accuracy-test score in test 4 which was administered in the form of a digital formative test. There is no such development in grammatical structure and pronunciation dimension of four test phases. Participants' test scores are nearly similar. On the other hand, they experienced significant improvements in terms of vocabulary dimension. Despite their vocabulary, average scores are 13.25 and 13.8 in test 1 and test 2, participants' vocabulary test scores are 19.9 and 21.0 in test 3 and test 4. The results may indicate that participants used various vocabularies during speaking skills tests.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative findings of the study were collected through a written structured interview with questions. Themes and codes were created for each question due to participants' responses. Some students' responses were also presented. The first question was asked to question-students' perspectives towards both traditional speaking tests and digital formative speaking tests. Students' responses lead the researcher to create seven themes for the first question. The first question, themes and these themes' repetitions rates are presented below;

Q.1. Could you compare the traditional speaking exam and the new speaking exam type

Table 3. Themes and repetitions rates for question 1.

Theme	Repetitions
Interaction with teacher	8
Collaboration & Interaction with peers	8
Negative views on traditional speaking skills assessment	15
Positive views on traditional speaking skills assessment	16
Positive views on digital formative assessment of speaking skills	29
Negative views on digital formative assessment of speaking skills	12
Topic diversity	2

The findings of the first question show that participants have positive views on digital formative speaking tests because the codes for this theme were repeated 29 times in the interview. On the other hand, participants have both negative and positive views on the traditional speaking test. They criticized and got dissatisfied with some parts of traditional speaking test such as teachers' existence during the test, lack of supportive materials before the test and during the test, being alone during the test and academic topics for speaking test. Another important finding of the first question is that participants are satisfied with students' collaboration and peer interaction features of digital formative assessment. Some students have negative views about the new speaking test and prefer interaction with the teacher during the speaking test which is absent in digital formative speaking tests. Samples from participants' responses are provided below;

S's R: 'I think that the new speaking exam type is so nice because we are relaxing and we can speak fluently. The traditional one makes us nervous so we cannot express our feelings. I think that the new speaking exam type is so useful for students. Even if students can speak fluently the traditional speaking exam doesn't let students express their ideas openly because of its stress and pressure. Additionally, it causes stress'.

S's R: 'I think traditional speaking exam causes stress and nervousness in person but the new speaking exam provides relaxation. You can be comfortable during the exam. The traditional speaking exam is harder than the new one. On the other hand, the new speaking exam is a group study, so it is hard to evaluate each students' speaking skills'.

S's R: 'I was less excited in new speaking exam and it had more fun than the traditional one. Because there wasn't a teacher during the exam and we were together with our friends which decreased our stress and anxiety. In traditional

speaking exam, there are at least 2 teachers and you can't make a mistake if you want a good grade from them. In new speaking exam, we had a chance to rerecord us video and time for preparation to our speech. Although new type's all advantages, I would prefer the traditional speaking exam. Because, we tried to upload our video to website and it took 40 minutes which caused lots of stresses.

Participants' responses to the second question lead the researcher to create six themes and various codes for these themes. The themes and their repetitions rates are presented below in table 4.

Q. 2. What are the positive sides of digital formative assessment?

Table 4. Themes and repetitions rates for question 2.

Themes	Repetitions
Students' collaboration during exam	14
Stress and anxiety	13
New learning opportunities	8
Preparation	18
Fluency & accuracy	15
Technology	3

Table 4 indicates that students are satisfied with the digital formative speaking test in terms of preparation before the speaking exam, peer collaboration before; and during the speaking exam. Besides, they think that digital formative speaking tests decrease their stress and speaking anxiety because of the relaxing test atmosphere. Hence, participants had the opportunity to perform their speech wherever they want. It is seen from students' performance videos that they were relaxing and they rested and relaxed at their homes and dormitories during the test. Some of the participants think that the digital formative speaking test provides new learning opportunities and it is useful to integrate technology into speaking tests. Another important result is that they think this test type makes them more fluent and accurate in their English speaking performance. Samples from participants' responses are provided below;

S's R: 'We studied as a group and discussed our ideas with each other. We learned many new information through videos which had been provided by teacher to choose a topic. We used technology during our speaking exam and it was fun. By talking to camera, I think we can improve our role-play skills'.

S's R: 'We are less excited because if we make mistake we can record the video again. We had fun because we made role plays and we improvised. We could search a Google about the topic so we can learn some information. It was beneficial for our imagination for example we behaved as if we were someone else (Felix Baumgartner). It was beneficial for us to collaborate with my friends we discussed and shared our ideas. It was exactly a teamwork'.

S's R: 'New exam type provides us a relax environment. It has flexible test environment. You can research whatever you want in dormitory or your home. You can choose the best topic which suits with your ideas and new exam type includes using technology which one knows to use it well'.

S's R: 'The positive sides of new exam type are much more than the negative sides the first one is self-confidence. When I make practice I feel myself comfortable. Speaking with my friends gives me more energy than teachers during the exam. The second one is happiness. Normally, I like speaking English, but when I am anxious I don't speak clearly in English. Our new exam type provided this relax atmosphere to me. Thus I was happy yesterday'.

S's R: 'The new exam type enables to explain your ideas or feelings. Thanks to the new type students can make new style about speaking topic and the new type makes them free about expressing their ideas. Maybe students can create atmosphere that give them comfort. Students share their idea with their friends to create good dialogues and good interview'.

Participants' responses to the third question were categorized under various categories and four themes were created to present the data. The themes for the third questions are 'individual assessment and peer work problem', 'time and time management problems', 'data size and video uploading problems', and 'application problems'.

Q. 3. What are the negative sides of new exam type? Did you experience and technological difficulties in the new exam?

Table 5. Themes and repetitions rates for question 3.

Themes	Repetitions
Individual assessment of student & peer work problem	8
Time & time management problems	16
Data size & video uploading problems	46
Application problems	6

Participants stated that they had faced technological problems in digital formative speaking tests. Thus, they wrote that after they recorded their videos, they were unable to upload those videos to digital platforms and applications such as Edmodo, Google drive, and Whatsapp. The ‘data size and video uploading problems’ have the highest repetition rate with 46 repetitions among all themes of qualitative data. Another negative aspect of this test arising from the participants is that they had time limitations and couldn’t manage their time efficiently. The theme for this issue got 16 relatively high repetitions. According to participants’ responses, another problematic side of the digital formative speaking test is peer-based problems and application’s complicated features. Samples from participants’ responses are provided below;

S’s R: ‘Actually, when we filmed it we didn’t come across with any difficulty but when we send it to teacher it is a bit difficult eventually we did it’.

S’s R: ‘I think there are some negative sides of new exam type. One of them there must be a person who manages the conversation in developed a device conversation can proceed smoothly and that gives anxiety to students’.

S’s R: ‘I think one of the negative sides of new exam type of definitely a shortage of time because we recorded our video again and again and this put me in stress. I thought that I will miss the leading time of our exams and also I had trouble while I am sending video’.

S’s R: ‘Yes unfortunately we had trouble when we were trying to send the video it is size was really huge and we had problems with Internet’.

S’s R: ‘The negative side maybe being shy in front of the camera for some students and Technology side must be easy because we had got time problem. We nearly couldn’t have caught the other exam. We couldn’t look at some terms about the topic that we forgot details about the topic’.

S’s R: ‘No I had any problem except for internet speed some of my friends cannot upload a video to the Edmodo’.

Question four had been asked to find out students’ suggestions and recommendations to improve digital formative speaking test in terms of its usefulness and effectiveness. Various themes were created for analysing students’ responses to the fourth question as ‘alternatives for video uploading’, ‘internet speed’, ‘topic diversity’ and ‘more time’. The results for the question four are presented through table 6 below;

Q.4. what are your suggestions and solution to these problems?

Table 6. Themes and repetitions rates for question 4.

Themes	Repetitions
Alternatives for video uploading	17
Internet speed	2
Topic diversity	3
More time	9

The results show that students are dissatisfied with the video uploading channels and prefer alternatives such as USB. Besides, they think that more time should be allotted to the digital formative speaking test. Some of the participants who mentioned about internet speed should be more improved and also topic diversity is required. Samples from participants' responses are provided below;

S's R: 'I think this new type exam has no problems may be the problem of application should be solved. Instead of these apps we can find a new app or we can download the videos to the USB'.

S's R: 'Actually if he has more time to make video it will be better for us. Before the exam, we can make more practice to shoot a video smoothly. if we make more video assignments in class, I think it improve speaking skills and we don't have lack of time'.

S's R: 'I believe including technology into the exams are not very proper. Paper-based but creative exams or face-to-face communication will take away these problems and won't make students me at least a bit more comfortable'.

S's R: 'I think students need more time and more subjects about talking it will be really cool if they could talk about their hobbies or occupations'.

Discussion

The findings of the current research indicate that digital formative tests contribute to students' speaking skills development. Especially, students' fluency and accuracy skills have been developed with the administration of these test types. Another significant finding of the research is that students enriched their vocabulary knowledge through the test content. As was discussed in the review of the literature part of the research, the main difference between formative and summative assessment is that formative

assessment is used for both learning and assessment and it fosters instruction during testing. The results of the current article support the idea with its findings. One more significant finding of the current research is that nearly all of the participants thought that digital formative assessment is an innovative testing type and highly effective for assessment of foreign language speaking skills. Additionally, participants stated that text content and preparation time are useful features of these test types. Another significant finding of the study is that some of the participants had negative perceptions towards digital formative tests because of technical problems such as weak internet connection, deficiencies in their technological devices, etc. In parallel with the findings of Black and William's research (1998) in which they reviewed over 250 research articles about formative assessment, formative assessment leads to highly important learning gains to students. Moreover, they found out that formative assessment enables students to focus on self-assessment, corrective feedback, and learning goals rather than performance goals by testing them more frequently than traditional testing (Black & William, 1998). The current research study reveals that foreign language speaking skills which are one of the most challenging skills for language learners require innovative and up to date assessment type and digital formative assessment is effective for academic achievement. Moreover, participants are satisfied with the digital formative assessment. Students' speaking skills such as pronunciation, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary development are improved with corrective feedbacks during digital formative assessment. Thus, formative assessment is a continuous process that aims to define learning deficiencies and develop learning process during assessment (Kincal & Ozan, 2018). Digital formative assessment is compatible with the constructivist approach which has been implemented since 2005 in Turkey (Boz & Boz, 2005). Another significant contribution of digital formative assessment to speaking skills' assessment process is that the researcher could compare the performances of the participants throughout the process. Unlike traditional summative assessment, digital formative assessment provides chances to teachers to compare student's performances. Despite its various positive sides, the digital formative has also drawbacks for students and teacher. First of all, it is somehow more challenging for students because they are exposed to more tests which actually make them practice more. As it is known, practice is crucial for productive skills (Golkova & Hubackova, 2014). The other negative aspect of this assessment type is that some students do not have advanced technological devices and they may have an internet connection problem. One another negative aspect is that its burdensome assessment type for teachers. Thus, each assessment cycle requires a preparation phase before the test, the test application will be time-consuming and giving feedback means extra burden for teachers. Despite these negative sides of digital formative assessment, it is highly effective and fruitful to develop language learners' speaking skills as the findings of the current research presented.

Conclusion

The present research aimed to find out whether the digital formative assessment is more effective than a summative assessment to test foreign language learners' speaking skills development. The findings of the research indicate that digital formative assessment fosters participants' fluency and accuracy skills. Besides, participants' vocabulary knowledge has been developed through digital formative assessment. Additionally, the current research shows that nearly all of the participants have a positive attitude towards this assessment type and they prefer to have it in the future assessment process with some modifications. Participants suggest that more time should be devoted to students' preparing for tests. Participants complain about the data size of videos, which they recorded their speaking performance. It causes uploading problems. The digital formative assessment occurs regularly and allows feedback. When classroom activities are implemented to assess language learners' oral performance, these tasks draw participants' attention, increase their motivation, support their metacognitive skills, and critical thinking (Stiggins, 2002; Facione, 2011). Digital formative assessment uses classroom-like activities on a digital platform for assessment purposes. Due to its continuous nature, language learners stick to the learning process. Jandris (2001, p. 4) "the heart of assessment is a continuing process in which the teacher, in collaboration with the student, uses the information to guide the next steps in learning" (p. 4). The digital formative assessment made language teachers and participants active during the assessment phase of the current research. The results show that it is quite effective to develop foreign language learners' speaking skills in many aspects.

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Exploratory Study of Ecuadorian Teachers' Understanding of Social Emotional Learning: An Examination of Primary School Teachers¹

Estudio exploratorio de la comprensión de los docentes ecuatorianos sobre el aprendizaje socioemocional: un análisis de los docentes de la escuela primaria

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Abstract

Direct instruction of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been suggested for improving academic performance and reducing behavioral issues in classrooms (CASEL, 2020). This exploratory study provides insight into how a group of Ecuadorian elementary school teachers define and understand SEL. It examined changes in teachers' perspectives and beliefs about their role in SEL integration in elementary school classrooms, after a full-day workshop focused on SEL integration. Quantitative and qualitative data collected before, during and after the SEL workshop indicated a positive change in the teachers' foundational knowledge of SEL after participation in the workshop; however, there was no observed change in the teachers' perceptions of their role in the actual implementation of SEL. Challenges and future implications for an effective integration of SEL are discussed in this research article.

Key words: Social Emotional Learning; SEL workshop; Professional Development (PD); teachers' SEL perspectives; elementary school teachers

Resumen

Se ha sugerido que la instrucción directa del aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL) puede mejorar el rendimiento académico y puede reducir los problemas de conducta en las aulas (CASEL, 2020). Este estudio exploratorio proporciona información sobre cómo un grupo de maestros ecuatorianos de una escuela primaria definen y comprenden SEL. Este estudio examinó los cambios en las perspectivas y creencias de los maestros sobre su papel en la integración de SEL en las aulas de la escuela primaria, después de un taller de un día completo centrado en la integración de SEL. Los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos recopilados antes, durante y después del taller de SEL indicaron un cambio positivo en el conocimiento esencial de los maestros sobre el SEL después de la participación en el taller; sin embargo, no se observaron cambios en las percepciones de los maestros sobre su rol en la implementación de SEL. En este artículo de investigación se discuten los desafíos y las implicaciones futuras para una integración efectiva de SEL.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje socioemocional; taller de aprendizaje socioemocional; desarrollo emocional; desarrollo profesional (DP); perspectivas SEL de los maestros; docentes de primaria

Resumo

Tem-se sugerido que a instrução direta da aprendizagem sócio emocional (SEL) pode melhorar o rendimento acadêmico e pode reduzir os problemas de conduta nas salas de aulas (CASEL, 2020). Este estudo exploratório proporciona informação sobre como um grupo de professores equatorianos de uma escola primária define e compreendem SEL. Este estudo examinou as mudanças nas perspectivas e crenças dos professores sobre seu papel na integração de SEL nas salas de aulas da escola primária, depois de uma oficina de um dia completo centrado na integração de SEL. Os dados quantitativos e qualitativos recopilados antes, durante e depois da oficina de SEL indicaram uma mudança positiva no conhecimento essencial dos professores sobre o SEL depois da participação na oficina; porém, não se observaram mudanças nas percepções dos professores sobre seu papel na implementação de SEL. Neste artigo de pesquisa se discutem os desafios e as implicações futuras para uma integração efetiva de SEL.

Palavras chave: Aprendizagem sócio-emocional; oficina de aprendizagem sócio emocional; desenvolvimento emocional; desenvolvimento profissional (DP); perspectivas SEL dos professores; docentes de primária

Introduction

Decades' of research suggest that the better developed students' social and emotional competencies (SEC) are, the greater success they experience in school and life (Bisquerra, 2003; McKown, 2017). Individuals with well-developed emotional skills are more likely to be effective, content, and productive (CASEL, 2020; The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2018). Growing attention from economists and international organizations such as the World Bank (Huerta, 2019) have generated discussions around the importance of promoting the development of such skills in the recent years.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the educational inequity among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those from lower income households, as the transition to online learning has cut school supports and resources (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). The current situation sharpened disparities related to race, gender, class, and other dimensions of individual and group identity (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams, 2019). As such, the need to look at current social and emotional practices that promote optimal developmental outcomes for all learners regardless of their cultural and economic background, has been intensified for educators intent on ensuring equitable instruction for students from different socio-cultural contexts (Yoder et al., 2020),

Ecuador's cultural and linguistic diversity is evident in the country's many living languages and current social issues. Stakeholders in the Ecuadorian educational system are challenged to understand and address cultural diversity (SUMMA, 2020). SEL may offer a foundation for developing diverse students' SEC (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Borowski, 2018). Effective SEL implementation can foster constructive classroom environments where educators can address issues such as privilege, discrimination, social justice, empowerment, and self-determination to bridge the inequalities that underserved communities face (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams, 2019). However, appropriate SEL instruction requires and begins with informed teachers' who know how to overcome obstacles to their students' social, emotional, and cognitive development (Schonert-Reichl et. al., 2017; Taylor & Larson, 1999).

Given this gap, this study explored Ecuadorian elementary teachers' sensitivity and acceptance of SEL as a component for successful schooling. It examined how the participants' definitions of SEL changed after a full-day workshop aimed at providing educators with foundational understanding about integrating SEL in regular classrooms.

Theoretical Framework

SEL in Latin America and in the context of Ecuador

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020), SEL involves processes through which individuals develop social and emotional competencies in five areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Growing attention from economists and international organizations such as the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Revista Educación, 2017; Huerta, 2019) have boosted political discussions around the importance of promoting the development of social and emotional skills. Most evidence regarding SEL is based on empirical and longitudinal studies in developed countries, while evidence is scarce in Latin America. Some studies (Bassi et al., 2012; Cunningham et al., 2016; Berniell et al., 2017) confirm the importance of these competences in educational and labor outcomes.

In Latin America, the publication of the IDB's "Disconnected" report (Bassi, 2012) as well as the publication of the report "More Skills for Work and Life" by the CAF report (Berniell et al., 2017) had a significant impact in the region.. The authors of Disconnected highlighted that schools in Latin America are not developing the skills children and young people need to be successful in the workplace and face the demands society requires (Bassi et al., 2012). Bassi et al. (2012) made an urgent call to focus efforts on improving both the quality and relevance of education systems and stressed that only in this way can the existing disconnection between the school and the labor market be mitigated. Similarly, the CAF report stated that Latin America needs to increase its efforts in the development of a set of skills that allows young people to navigate and adapt to the changing environments of the years to come (Berniell et al., 2017). The international evidence shows the importance these skills have on learning and on the present and future achievements of students.

A few Latin American countries such as Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Uruguay explicitly mention SEL in their curriculum (Revista Educación, 2017; INEED, 2020). Most consider transversal skills such as communication and collaborative work. They have been working to develop frameworks for the integration of SEL in the classroom (INEED, 2020). However, teachers in Latin America are concerned about the necessary training to deliver effectively SEL instruction (Revista Educación, 2017).

Diversity in Ecuador and the Need for SEL

Direct SEL instruction has been positively associated with subjective well-being, engaged citizenship, academic performance and success, salary level, etc. (Bisquerra, 2003; Bridgeland et al., 2013; Busso et al., 2017; CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias et al., 1997; Goodman et al., 2015; Roffey, 2017; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017; Zins, 2004). Due to Ecuador's diversity, the country's educators' work requires consideration of the sociocultural context of schools and communities, as well as of the support available to stakeholders whose goal is to validate all learners' rights (Van Damme et al., 2013).

Ecuador's cultural and linguistic diversity is evident in the country's many living languages. According to Ethnologue (2020), there are 21 indigenous languages (e.g., Cofán, and Quechua) (Constitución Política del Ecuador, 1998). Ecuador's National Institute of the Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2015) documented 93% of Ecuador's population speaks Castilian and 4.1% speak Quechua. Census information shows the country's population was composed of 71.9% mestizos (mixed Amerindian and white), 7.4% Montubio, 7% Amerindian, 6.1% white, 4.3% Afroecuadorian, 1.9% mulato, 1% black, and 0.4% other (INEC, 2015). Thus, stakeholders in the Ecuadorian educational system are challenged to understand and address cultural diversity (SUMMA, 2020). Because SEL promotes awareness about disparities in schooling, opportunity gaps, and the history of unequal schooling (Gregory & Fergus, 2017), the researchers posited that it would contribute to equitable schooling in Ecuador. SEL promotes awareness about disparities in schooling, opportunity gaps, and the history of unequal schooling (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Thus, these researchers posited that SEL will contribute to provision of equitable schooling in Ecuador.

Teacher Training for the Integration of SEL

Research has recognized the key role teachers play in modeling and providing students with tools to develop SEL and in creating nurturing learning environments (Bisquerra, 2011; Elias et al., 1997; Taylor & Larson, 1999; Waajid et al., 2013). The philosophy underpinning an intervention, the beliefs as well as the skills of teachers, are some of the implementation factors that promote or hinder the efficacy of SEL. In its support of the rights of all students, SEL ensures educators create environments that acknowledge diversity as a strength. Hence training is key to improving teachers' knowledge of SEL and their ability to apply it (Castillo et al., 2013; Roffey & McCarthy, 2013; Talvio et al., 2013; Shulman & Sherin, 2004;).

Educational reforms require teachers to change their practice, and for that to effectively occur, teachers need to understand and internalize the theory underlying

the proposed change (Shulman & Sherin, 2004). Providing Ecuadorian teachers with foundational knowledge of SEL could increase the likelihood of successful reforms. Effective professional development (PD) programs integrate professional learning focused on SEL as well as other areas that embed SEL practices and concepts into the classroom (CASEL Resource District Center, 2020). Therefore, elementary Ecuadorian teachers need opportunities to acquire foundational knowledge about SEL, understand why it is necessary, and master ways to start infusing it in their schools and classrooms.

Multiculturalism in Education

Teachers' ability to promote affirming classroom environments for diverse contexts is affected by their perceptions of their culture and their awareness of how their cultural norms influence their professional endeavours (Groulx & Silva, 2010). Culturally responsive educators do not privilege some groups of students and disadvantaging others. (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Kincheloe, 2008). This work considers that preparing educators to deliver culturally responsive curricula is key for a nation with Ecuador's students (Banks, 1981, 2014; Buckelew & Fishman, 2011; Nieto, 2018).

Methodology

This exploratory study used a mixed-method approach of data collection. Quantitative data were gathered through a six-point Likert scale survey, and qualitative data were gathered in two focus group discussions and open-ended questions. Data was collected before, during and after the SEL workshop. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1 What are Ecuadorian elementary school teachers' definitions and understanding of SEL in the classroom?

RQ2 How do the teachers' definitions of SEL change due to participation in a workshop focused on SEL?

RQ3 How do teachers perceive the importance of the components of SEL as impacted by a workshop?

Participants

A sample of 20 credentialed elementary Ecuadorian teachers participated in a full-day workshop on SEL that provided foundational knowledge about SEL: what it

is, why it is necessary, and how to start effectively integrating it into the classroom. This workshop was part of a series of teacher (PD) workshops. Two focus groups were conducted before the SEL workshop to investigate the participants' understanding of SEL concepts by discussing three questions: (1) how teachers define SEL, (2) how they apply it in the classroom, and (3) what kind of PD or training they have received to integrate SEL in the classroom. These data were used to answer RQ1.

Two open-ended questions were included in the post-test, one of which asked teachers to define SEL. These data were collected and analyzed. Two hands-on activities were included to promote active participation and reflection among the participants. During both activities, teachers were asked to write down their thoughts while discussing in small groups and then share them with the whole group. Audio recordings of these presentations as well as the notes taken during the activities were analyzed. These data together with the open-ended questions were used to answer RQ2.

A researcher-developed survey consisting of 20 6-point Likert-scale items was administered before (pretest) and after (posttest) the workshop. Items 1 to 20 refer to different components of SEL and its integration. Data collected from the pre and post-tests were used to answer RQ3. The items of the survey were developed to explore the predisposition of the participants toward SEL. Items utilized constructs including an SEL overview, the main contribution of SEL integration, a mindfulness overview, SEL integration, and attitudes toward SEL integration.

Descriptive statistics (mean, median, and standard deviation) provided basic features to summarize the obtained data. Wilcoxon's test was run to calculate and compare the difference between the data obtained from the pre and post-tests of the quantitative data. Regarding qualitative data, a constant comparison analysis technique was utilized to determine the themes and to cross-reference them with domains from the literature. The constant comparison process was chosen because it allows for coding of the data based on meaningful parts of the text and comparison of the codes to form themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Miles et al., 2014).

Results

RQ1: What are Ecuadorian elementary school teachers' definitions and understanding of SEL in the classroom?

Participants were asked to define SEL and share what they know about it in the pre workshop focus group discussions. Two patterns can be identified. The first pattern refers to strategies to keep students busy to alleviate family problems. Most

of the teachers agreed that SEL is some kind of “game” or “expression of affection” so students keep their minds off their family problems and are able to focus in class. All the participants agreed that students’ family problems could affect their attention and work in class. The second pattern refers to the teachers’ awareness and understanding of students’ backgrounds. Most of the teachers related SEL to the ability to recognize and understand the reasons for students’ behavioral changes. One of the focus groups related SEL with the concept of self-esteem. When asked about SEL, this group of teachers said *“SEL has to do with the lack of self-esteem that comes from home. Home is where they [students] build that [self-esteem], and that self-esteem reflects the situation at home.”* Also, they highlighted the importance of the quality of the relationship of students with their parents and teachers and the effect it has on students’ learning.

When asked whether they apply any knowledge or concepts of SEL in their lesson plans, participants in the focus group did not provide information to indicate how SEL is incorporated into their lesson plans. Most of them expressed that based on their observations, they adapt their lessons to promote students’ interest as well as to create a safe learning environment. One teacher indicated, *“When a student was a good student the previous year and this year the student is not performing academically, I inquired with the parents about the home situation, with other teachers, and counselors to determine the cause. I used this information to support the student emotionally through my lesson plans.”* Another teacher expressed: *“Teachers should make the student feel good and motivated, interested. [So they can say] ‘I like this’”*

Finally, participants were asked about their previous training on SEL. All of them agreed they received some type of PD courses or training to learn about neuroeducation, educational psychology and/or emotions. One of the teachers suggested that these trainings were “rather superficial,” while another teacher added that she would like to receive training directly related to her job as a preschool teacher. In addition, some participants agreed they did not receive any formal education related to SEL, while others referred to their psychology courses in their undergraduate programs. One teacher added that the school psychologists are the agents responsible for assessing students’ emotional development. Another teacher mentioned the lack of support from school administrators and from the students’ families. Other teachers agreed that measures taken to improve student behavior were not effective because “results are not seen” or “there is no follow-up.”

RQ2 How do these teachers’ definitions of SEL change due to participation in a workshop focused on SEL?

During the focus group, teachers mainly related SEL to teachers’ responsibility in their work to boost students’ self-esteem, motivation and interest to learn, all of which can be affected by family problems. Notes and recordings from the first activity

of the workshop, which included five groups, document that teachers refer to SEL using some of the concepts discussed during the workshop. Each group had to identify three concepts to define SEL. Nine out of the 15 terms selected referred to three of the core competencies presented: self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and relational skills. Five of these terms referred to the self-regulation skill; that is, four out of the five groups agreed that “self-regulation,” “learning how to behave,” or “thinking before acting” are the key terms that define SEL. The other selected terms referred to terms used throughout the first part of the workshop such as emotions, knowledge, participative method, planning, and guidance, indicating a change in these teachers’ use of language or terminology to define SEL after the workshop. Before the workshop, the teachers used vague language to provide a definition of SEL, while after the workshop they included and defined specific concepts associated with the core competencies presented. When each of the groups shared the terms, they read their notes aloud; some of them explained briefly the definition of self-regulation. Two of the groups agreed that the terms they chose were based on the SEL definition discussed during the workshop. When asked to select three feelings/emotions that promote student learning, four out of the five groups mentioned happiness and/or academic content. Some teachers explained that this could be achieved through good student-teacher rapport or by allowing students to participate in the class content selection. Three of the groups selected empathy as a key emotion to promote student learning, while two mentioned a safe learning environment. Some other groups selected negative feelings such as frustration, fear, sadness, anger, and confusion; they explained these feelings can help teachers and students identify areas to work on.

During the second hands-on activity, teachers were divided into five groups and asked to select one of the seven practical class activities presented in the workshop (identifying similarities and differences; sharing thorns and roses; reading to identify and/or roleplay writer’s emotions; writing to oneself; practicing mindfulness through breathing, silence and concentration; creating the corner of emotions; and teaching through positive examples) and explain possible positive results they would expect as well as possible challenges of implementation. Two groups selected “sharing thorns and roses,” two selected “creating the corner of the emotions,” and one decided to discuss “teaching through positive examples.” Regarding the “thorns and roses” activity – an activity in which students are encouraged to share a negative and a positive aspect of their day and something to which they are looking forward, the groups claimed as positive that students would share their emotions. One of the groups said this would help the teachers to recognize the personal struggles the student is facing: “We will know what’s happening to them.” As challenges, both groups expressed positive consequences such as “improve their self-regulation,” “solve conflicts,” and “identify their own emotions.” However, when the researcher inquired about the implementation challenges, they agreed there would not be an implementation challenge, although the challenge to achieve the positive results would be that students express their emotions naturally and allow the teacher to be a participant and try to help them when possible. The groups

that selected the use of a corner of the emotions (a quiet area of the classroom for students to do activities that will help them regulate their emotions and return to the classroom activities productively) to enhance the social and emotional competencies (SEC) agreed students would develop aspects related to their self-awareness and self-regulation such as recognizing, expressing and managing emotions.

Regarding challenges, teachers also outlined actions that could be considered positive outcomes such as academic improvement and SEC development. However, when asked for clarification, some teachers explained that teachers need to teach in different ways to cater to different students. Other teachers agreed that students have difficulties focusing on an activity and calming down and reflecting on their actions. Finally, the other group discussed the “teaching through positive examples” activity, that is, using positive language and always pointing out good behavior. This group of teachers believed this activity would improve students’ motivation and academic development. However, they agreed there could be some technical problems or lack of resources. Overall, results for activity 2 showed teachers’ general understanding of the activity and its relationship with SEL; however, teachers did not clearly express what challenges and/or more concrete outcomes these activities would have on their students and classroom as a whole.

Four main types of definitions can be identified in the teachers’ responses to the open-ended questions on the survey. Nine out of the 17 respondents defined SEL, referring to one or more of the core competencies discussed during the workshop. Most of them referred to the development of the responsible decision-making competency; others referred to self-awareness and/or social awareness competencies. Four teachers defined SEL as a tool or a method that teachers use to help students. Two teachers defined SEL as a “set of emotions” that has a positive impact on the students and on the classroom ambiance. Finally, two teachers referred to SEL as “humanistic, consistent, and for all”; these three words were used in the workshop to describe approaches to integrate SEL in classrooms.

RQ3 How do teachers perceive the importance of the components of SEL as impacted by a workshop?

Data collected from the pre- and post-tests suggest this group of Ecuadorian teachers agreed on the importance of SEL and its integration in classrooms. Table 1 shows a slight increase in the teachers’ agreement with Q1, Q2, and Q3 when referring to the overview of SEL. The median (*MD*) scores show an increase in the values from agree to strongly agree, which demonstrates a slight change in teachers’ understanding of the theoretical foundation of SEL. This change in Q1, Q2, and Q3 may indicate teachers’ increased understanding of the impact of SEL in relationship building and academic performance.

Table 1. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Overview

Question	Pretest			Posttest		
	M	MD	SD	M	MD	SD
Q1.Teaching social emotional skills helps improve the relationships among students.	5.40	5.00	0.50	5.72	6.00	0.46
Q2.Teaching social emotional skills helps improve the relationships between teachers and students.	5.45	5.00	0.51	5.72	6.00	0.46
Q3.Teaching social emotional skills helps improve students' academic performance.	5.50	5.50	0.51	5.67	6.00	0.49

Scale: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Somewhat Disagree=3; Somewhat Agree=4; Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6

Table 2 shows a slight increase in the values of the mean scores for Q4 ($M_{pretest} = 5.35$; $M_{posttest} = 5.50$) and Q5 ($M_{pretest} = 5.35$; $M_{posttest} = 5.50$). This indicates a little change in the teachers' agreement with the contribution of SEL to the classroom environment and the development of students' SEC. However, Q6 shows a slight decrease ($M_{pretest} = 5.40$; $M_{posttest} = 5.22$) in the teachers' agreement about the contribution of SEL for promoting collaboration between parents and teachers. This decrease in agreement could be explained through the qualitative data, which provides evidence of the lack of support from families and the difficulties teachers face to engage students in the learning process.

Table 2. Main contribution of SEL integration

Question	Pretest			Posttest		
	M	MD	SD	M	MD	SD
Q4.The main contribution of SEL is that it provides the student with a space in which to express their feelings freely.	5.35	5.00	0.49	5.50	6.00	0.71
Q5.The main contribution of SEL is that it enhances the student's academic and personal success through the development of social and emotional competencies.	5.40	5.00	0.50	5.61	6.00	0.50
Q6.The main contribution of SEL is that it encourages teachers and families to work together in a systematic way.	5.40	5.00	0.60	5.22	5.00	0.81

Scale: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Somewhat Disagree=3; Somewhat Agree=4; Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6

Table 3 shows Q7, Q8, and Q9 regarding the main objectives of mindfulness. Both Q7 and Q8 show a slight increase in the mean scores and the median, indicating change in teachers' understanding of the outcomes of integrating mindfulness in their classrooms, while Q9 show a very small decrease in the values of the mean scores and no change in the median values ($M_{pretest} = 5.60$; $M_{posttest} = 5.56$; $MD_{pretest} = 6.00$; $MD_{posttest} = 6.00$). This could indicate that teachers' view of the effect of mindfulness in students' interpersonal skills did not change due to the workshop.

Table 3. Mindfulness overview

Question	Pretest			Posttest		
	M	MD	SD	M	MD	SD
Q7.The main objective of integrating mindfulness in the classroom is to make the student feel comfortable in class through relaxation activities.	5.30	5.00	0.57	5.50	6.00	0.71
Q8.The main objective of integrating mindfulness in the classroom is to improve students' attention and concentration capacity.	5.40	5.00	0.50	5.67	6.00	0.49
Q9.The main objective of integrating mindfulness in the classroom is to foster the development of interpersonal skills.	5.60	6.00	0.50	5.56	6.00	0.51

Scale: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Somewhat Disagree=3; Somewhat Agree=4; Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6

Table 4 shows six survey items (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15) referring to the effective integration of SEL in the classroom and the role of the teacher. Q11, Q14, and Q15 had a change in the mean scores, indicating teachers' change in their agreement about considering emotions in student assessment as well as considering appropriate student behavior and the engagement of other institutional actors for effective SEL implementation. There was little or no change in Q10, Q12, and Q13, indicating that teachers' views about making goals explicit and pointing out "correct" and "incorrect" student behavior did not vary due to the workshop.

Table 4. SEL Integration

Question	Pretest			Posttest		
	M	MD	SD	M	MD	SD
Q10.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should make socioemotional learning objectives explicit.	5.11	5.00	0.94	5.11	5.00	0.76
Q11.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should consider students' emotions in their evaluation.	4.90	5.00	0.97	5.39	6.00	0.78
Q12.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should point out "correct" behavior of students.	5.20	5.00	0.83	5.17	5.00	0.79
Q13.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should point out "incorrect" behavior of students.	3.30	3.00	1.84	3.33	2.50	2.13
Q14.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should not ignore inappropriate classroom behavior.	3.75	4.50	2.12	4.28	4.50	2.03
Q15.For an effective integration of Social Emotional Learning, the teacher should involve all institutional actors.	5.05	5.00	1.32	5.35	5.00	0.61

Scale: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Somewhat Disagree=3; Somewhat Agree=4; Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6

Table 5 shows a slight increase in the values of each of the mean scores, indicating teachers' stronger agreement about their role in the integration of SEL after their participation in the workshop.

Table 5. Attitude towards SEL integration

Question	Pretest			Posttest		
	M	MD	SD	M	MD	SD
Q16.I feel comfortable teaching social emotional skills to students.	4.90	6.00	1.77	5.41	6.00	0.71
Q17. I feel comfortable sharing my emotions with my students.	4.75	5.00	1.21	5.39	6.00	0.78
Q18.It is my job to help students understand and manage their emotions.	5.30	5.00	0.73	5.72	6.00	0.46
Q19. It is my job to help students develop their social-emotional competencies.	4.95	5.00	1.05	5.59	6.00	0.62
Q20.It is my job to assess my students' personal development.	4.15	5.00	1.66	5.11	5.50	1.41

Scale: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Somewhat Disagree=3; Somewhat Agree=4; Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6

A Wilcoxon signed ranks test was run; however, the results showed no significant difference ($Z = 1.93$, $p = .073$) between the scores obtained from the pre- and post-tests. This result may be explained due to the length of the workshop and the need for more in-depth PD on the SEL concepts and its impact on students' emotional and academic development.

Findings

Results suggest that teachers benefited from the SEL workshop. Although the quantitative data did not produce any statistical significance from pre to post-test to show a difference in the responses; the qualitative data generated evidence of the changes in the knowledge among participants regarding the SEL concepts and their integration in the classroom. During the focus group discussions, the participants indicated their perception that a relationship exists between SEL, self-esteem and love. However, by the end of the workshop, participants were able to discuss self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making while expressing proper SEL terminology to help with students' development of SEC. The participants' SEL definitions were not clearly presented before the workshop; however, after the workshop, the participants discussed self-regulation terms and the management of emotions and knowledge to obtain positive results in the classroom. The participants'

definitions before the workshop related to the students' emotions as opposed to the development of skills and knowledge to manage one's emotions as it is defined in the field. This lack of alignment indicates the limited understanding of the definition of SEL and the SEL components for effective implementation in the classroom. The teachers indicated the importance of incorporating these concepts to identify and provide needed supports. This indicates that the workshop provided these teachers with a relevant and necessary theoretical background for a more effective discussion of SEL.

Regarding the integration of SEL in the classroom, the quantitative data showed a slight change in the mean (*M*) and median (*MD*) scores for some of the survey items (see Table 4 and Table 5) related to the participants' knowledge of integrating SEL. However, the qualitative data indicated gaps in the comprehension of SEL concepts and its implementation as part of the lesson plan(s). For example, a group of teachers expressed that being able to understand students' problems/mood at the beginning of the day would help them select the proper strategy to address the students' needs. While the survey data show a slight increase in teachers' understanding of their role in effective SEL implementation, qualitative data indicate that these teachers do not embed any SEL-related concepts, strategies or activities in their lesson plans. In addition, when discussing positive outcomes and expected challenges, this group of teachers was not able to differentiate between challenges and outcomes, thereby showing insufficient knowledge about the implementation of SEL. Hence, while the quantitative data indicated positive changes regarding these teachers' understanding of SEL and the need for its integration in the classroom, the qualitative data seemed to show no change in the teachers' ability to envision the implementation of SEL in real classrooms. This indicates the need for in-depth PD.

Overall, this study provided insight into how a PD workshop may change teachers' understanding and perceptions of SEL, its components, and their own role in its implementation. It also provided evidence of the lack of preparation and knowledge for the effective integration of SEL in the classroom. Although this is a first attempt to explore Ecuadorian teachers' understanding and perspectives of SEL, it serves as a springboard for further discussion to provide Ecuadorian teachers with strategies to integrate SEL into their classrooms.

Conclusions

The results of this study suggest the need for further PD to guide teachers in the integration of SEL in classroom instruction. It is key that Ecuadorian teachers have a clear understanding of what SEL is, how to implement it in their own practices, and what their role is in the development of SEC in their students. Teachers' understanding the different concepts involved in SEL will allow them to respond to their student's needs. In addition, SEL knowledge will allow the implementation of teaching strategies as means to improve academic achievement. For effective implementation, further training is needed to provide teachers with the tools to embed SEL in their lesson plans. Then the development of their students' SEC will be intentional and the teachers will be able to identify and tackle challenges in spite of the emotional issues children may be facing at different stages of life. The successful implementation of SEL concepts in the classroom will be driven by the development of goals and objectives per grade level so the students will develop according to their emotional level and needs, providing students with the necessary tools to succeed in the future.

Limitations

The research tools used for this study may pose a number of limitations that might serve as counter arguments for the contributions of this study; however, this research is a key starting point to understand and support the effective integration of SEL-related PD for secondary school Ecuadorian teachers. In addition, this group of Ecuadorian teachers agreed with the need and benefits of explicitly promoting SEL in teacher PD. This is a modest investment in SEL, but it will certainly pay off for individuals, schools, and our society.

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Factors that de-motivate EFL students' participation at a school of languages in the state of Veracruz, Mexico¹

Factores que desmotivan la participación
en clase de los alumnos de inglés como
lengua extranjera en una escuela de
idiomas

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Abstract

The goal of this small-scale qualitative study was to investigate the reasons and factors that may demotivate a group of university EFL students from participating in class, in the context of a school of language in the central part of the state of Veracruz in Mexico. While previous studies conducted, in this same setting, have focused on factors that affect classroom participation in general, this study involved interviews and observations to gain a comprehensive overview of the demotivating factors that impact these EFL students' participation levels in terms of oral production. The study focuses on the participation habits of the interviewed students, their perceptions of the factors that may inhibit them, that discourage them from participating fully in class, and that affect learning. The findings suggest that the participants' perceptions of what participation means, and their self-esteem and confidence affect their level of involvement. They also indicate that the teacher's role is an important variable in why students decide to remain silent.

Key words: class participation, demotivation factors, EFL, students' perceptions.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio de corte cualitativo fue las razones y los factores que pudieran desalentar la participación, dentro del salón de clases, de un grupo de estudiantes de una licenciatura en inglés como lengua extranjera, ofertada en el estado de Veracruz, México. Mientras que estudios previos, en este mismo contexto, se han enfocado en los factores que afectan la participación en clase en general, este estudio involucró entrevistas y observaciones para obtener una visión amplia de los factores que impactan los niveles de participación, en términos de producción oral de este grupo de estudiantes de inglés. Este estudio se enfoca en los hábitos de participación de los estudiantes y sus percepciones de los factores que pudieran inhibirla, que desmotivan a los involucrados para participar ampliamente en clase, así como sus posibles efectos en el aprendizaje. Los datos sugieren que la percepción de lo que los entrevistados entienden por participación, así como su nivel de autoestima y de confianza afectan su nivel de involucramiento. Los resultados también indican que el papel de los profesores es una variable importante por la cual los estudiantes deciden permanecer en silencio.

Palabras clave: factores desmotivadores, inglés como lengua extranjera, participación en clase, percepciones de estudiantes.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo de corte qualitativo foi descobrir a natureza dos fatores que puderam desanimar a participação, dentro da sala de aulas, de estudantes de uma licenciatura de inglês como língua estrangeira em Veracruz, México. Enquanto os estudos prévios se enfocaram nos fatores que afetam a participação em sala de aula em geral, este estudo envolveu entrevistas a profundidade e observações para obter uma visão ampla dos fatores que impactam os níveis de participação de estudantes de inglês. Este estudo se enfoca nos hábitos de participação dos estudantes e as suas percepções dos fatores que pudessem inibi-la, que desmotivam os participantes para participar amplamente em aula, assim como os seus possíveis efeitos negativos na palavra. Os dados sugerem que a percepção de participação dos entrevistados e seu nível de autoestima e de confiança afetam seu nível de participação. Os resultados também indicam que o papel dos professores é uma variável importante pela qual os estudantes decidem permanecer em silêncio.

Palavras chave: Falta de motivação; estudantes de inglês; participação; percepções; fatores de participação; autoestima; confiança

Introduction

The urge to carry out this study stems, on the one hand, from our teaching experience, and on the other, from conversations with students who were notoriously shy in terms of class participation, as they seldom, if ever, contributed anything at all: an opinion, a comment, an answer to the teacher's questions, et cetera, in the course of a class.

It must be highlighted that is a recurring problem, as in every class, every semester, there is a considerable number of students who choose to remain silent in class, while the burden, so to speak, of class participation is borne by a limited number of their classmates. This can often cause frustration and disappointment in many of my colleagues, as their efforts to create a highly participative environment in class do not seem to bear fruit. In addition, when confronted when their low involvement in class, most of our students' reactions to attempts to find out what prevents them from participating in class have consisted in vague, elusive answers that can be summarized as "It's just that I don't like speaking in class".

In view of this, we decided to run a full, small-scale research study, within the context of a specific school of languages, where class interaction could be observed and the students could be interviewed, to try to discover the reasons behind poor motivation to participate in class. Our hypothesis was that this might be a multifactorial phenomenon that could involve the students' attitudes and beliefs as well as the teachers' class management. Thus, we set out to design a study to collect data to prove or disprove the accurateness of our assumptions.

However, the first step was to clarify the meaning of participation, which Wenger (1998) defines as "a process of taking part in something and [...] the relations with others that reflect the process. A complex process that combines doing, talking, feeling, and belonging" (p. 55).

Becoming involved in something; that is, participating, helps people to learn about many things by sharing their perspectives and learning from others (Reid, Jensen, Nickel & Simovska, 2008). Consequently, participation is assumed to be a beneficial part of any learning process. For example, Smith (1977) defines participation as the students' act of making questions and comments; it helps them to explore their own knowledge, develop thinking skills, and enhances their intellectual development.

In particular, in the case of EFL learning, participation is a means by which students can express their interest in the topic, and practice their learning abilities, as well as their writing, listening, and speaking skills (Czekanski & Wolf, 2013). Furthermore, Shindler (2003) points out that there is a bond between students' development and classroom participation, where classroom participation helps them to keep to their task and engage in cooperative work.

Nevertheless, classroom participation often seems to be a challenging task. Despite being aware of the importance of participation, many students choose to be silent in class. Participation is not only constructed by students' knowledge and skills; it also depends on other important factors such as the teacher's attitude, the classroom environment, and the students' interests, personality, skills, and motivation (Murray & Lang, 1997).

There are factors, however, that might discourage learners from achieving the goal of learning a foreign language. A closer inspection of these factors may help to understand what causes students' limited or active participation. This inquiry focused on analyzing the various factors that may de-motivate learners to participate in an intermediate EFL classroom.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that may demotivate students' classroom participation by exploring learners' perceptions. These questions were posed:

What is the nature de-motivation to participate in the EFL classroom in a group of intermediate English level students?

Why do some students rarely participate in class, while others frequently do so?

Why is it difficult for some students to participate in class?

Literature Review

Participation can be seen in different ways by different teachers and students. For the purpose of this paper, it must be understood as either short exchanges between students and teachers, or between students and students, or a long conversation in a pair working activity (Allwright, Allwright, & Bailey, 1991). It must be highlighted that classroom participation refers to the students' active classroom involvement, which in some cases, can influence the teacher's grading scheme. In other words, participation can be viewed as an integral part of the evaluation process (Petress, 2006). It can also be considered as proof of an engagement with the teacher, their classmates and active involvement with the content of the lesson (Petress, 2006; Mustaphaa, Suryani, Rahmanb, & Yunusb, 2010).

According to Petress (2006), "class participation is composed of three evaluative dimensions: quantity, dependability, and quality" (p. 1). The quantity dimension refers to the opportunities each student has to express their ideas and opinions as evidence of their awareness regarding class discussion. Dependability is defined as the relevant and constructive contributions of students when appropriate. Quality participation denotes the regular interaction in class during which students demonstrate evidence

of their awareness concerning the topic of discussion. These three dimensions have the same purpose, but they may have a different weighting in different moments of the class (Petress, 2006).

One of the benefits of participation in EFL settings, and more specially, in the context of this study, is that students who are active participants have the opportunity to practice the target language. I agree with the view that students' improvement in the language learning process is reflected in what students can say in the target language, as opposed to what they want to say (Swain, 1985). In addition, there is substantial evidence to support the notion that teachers and peers' feedback during or after their participation gives students the opportunity to be corrected and achieve their goal of speaking the language (Czekanski & Wolf, 2010; Rocca, 2010).

Additionally, students take responsibility for their learning when they are encouraged to participate in classroom tasks (Mohd, Noor, & Maizatul, 2012). Thus, it can be safely argued that learners develop their communicative and analytical presentation skills through their interactions with peers and teachers. As a group, they develop their collaborative and team-working skills (Ho, 2007).

As teachers, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in order to promote active participation, a safe environment is a continuous process that should begin from the first day of classes (Michael & Modell, 2003). Maintaining a positive and secure environment promotes positive teacher-student interactions; it engages appropriate students' behavior, classroom management, and active classroom participation (Reifman, 2008). The physical environment can be defined as the students' learning space that facilitates the learners' movement, activities development, and fluency of active learning (Scarlett, 2015; Hue & Li, 2008). "The physical space in the classroom stimulates and facilitates students' use of the target language they have previously been introduced to and practiced with the teacher" (Robinson & Kang, as cited in Schwartz, 2018, p.7). According to Michael and Modell (2003) "students will not participate in an active learning environment if they do not feel safe doing so" (p. 68). A safe place to learn encourages students to generate and share ideas during class discussion, teamwork, and individual tasks (Shepherd & Linn, 2015). The effective use of physical space, where students spend most of their learning time, has a significant effect on their classroom participation. (Hue & Li, 2008; Crawford, 2004).

The size of a group also matters. In a classroom with fewer students, they are likely to have more opportunities for significant participation than those in other classrooms with many students (Allwright et al., 1991; Tode, 2008; Howard, Geller, Rubin, & Nodvin, 2006). In contrast, a large group of students inhibits classroom participation, as they are aware of the time for, and the quality of, their contributions. Students might feel concerned that there are no significant opportunities for classroom participation and teacher's feedback (Edwards & Liu, 2008). Teachers' practice, attitudes, and motivation

As Fritschner (2000) points out, the teacher's attitude is an important factor in students' motivation and involvement in the lesson. Some teachers might encourage students to feel enthusiastic about learning a new language, whereas others might succeed in making students think negatively (Aulls, 2004). Therefore, one of the necessary roles of the teacher is to encourage students to develop the use of the target language in the classroom (Fritschner, 2000). The extent to which they motivate or do not motivate may influence or affect students when making decisions about whether or not to share their ideas and opinions (Hennessy & Warwick, 2013; Allwright et al., 1991).

It is true that many teachers may have difficulties in the way they teach and approach course content organization (Peterson, 2001). Ho (2007) claims that "traditional methods have an impact on the way language lessons are developed [...] Most of the classes are very bond to the teacher-centered classroom and minimal participation" (p. 7). Several researchers stress that a language lesson designed to be relevant in learners' discussions and interaction helps them to develop their communicative skills (Ho, 2007; Rocca, 2010). In addition, the clearer the definition and reason to participate, the more meaningful the participation will be (Allwright et al., 1991).

Another important aspect is the time the teacher allows for participation. Students might want to participate, but sometimes the teacher does not plan for enough time for the students to speak up (Czekanski & Wolf, 2010). If participation is part of the evaluating schema or assessment of learning, teachers must let students know that participation is an important component of their grades, and thus, they must be given more time than usual (Rocca, 2010; Zacharias, 2014; Mustaphaa, et al, 2010).

Finally, feedback can be a meaningful process of interaction and dialogue between the teacher and the student (Reifman, 2008). Multiple sources and types of feedback allow students to develop their ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning and behavior, as well as become more independent of their teachers (Reifman, 2008). Mckeachie and Svinicki (2011) claim that "feedback must be geared to strengthening the students' ability to judge the quality of their own work" (p. 114). Feedback benefits students when they receive it and when they have the chance to generate their own feedback while producing an assignment (Mckeachie & Svinicki, 2011). In sum, the adequate use of feedback in the classroom can make students' feel valued and boost their self-esteem and confidence (Reifman, 2008).

Students' learning styles

Teachers sometimes ask students to participate when they do not know their needs (Mustaphaa, et al 2010). A visual centered activity might not have the same impact on a kinesthetic student as on a visual student, consequently, their amount of participation will be different (Allwright et al., 1991). In addition, some students choose to be

passive participants because they think they learn more by listening and keeping quiet. However, they are paying attention to the class by using strategies such as taking notes (Mustaphaa, et al, 2010; Zacharias, 2014). Therefore, a mixture of instructional activities for all learning styles is recommendable to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and provide quality participation (Mustaphaa, et al 2010).

A student's personality is another significant aspect. Passive participants tend to be shy, have low self-esteem, or suffer from anxiety (Tatar, 2005). Any combination of these characteristics may make students less likely to contribute to in-class group discussions and participate voluntarily (Rollins, 2014; Grossman, 2004; Allwright et al., 1991). Attitudes towards the class, the teacher, or classmates can impact students' decisions to participate in activities or interact (Reifman, 2008). Students might express a negative attitude towards participation if they have had unpleasant experiences such as forced participation or negative criticism from peers (Allwright et al., 1991). Then again, if students believe that their contributions to the lesson help them to gain knowledge and confidence in speaking the language, they will be more likely to participate and appreciate being corrected by their teachers (Tatar, 2005). If students have a positive perception of participation, they are also more likely to contribute to the class (Hill, 2007).

Students' motivation to learn a new language matters because it influences how and if students achieve their goal in language learning (Allwright et al., 1990). According to research on motivation by Clement, Gardner, and Smythe (1977) in Canada, learners who receive encouragement, tend to be much more active in class, volunteer more, and provide more responses that are correct. When the teacher shows students that their contributions and ideas are important for the class and their learning process, the probability of the students' positive response to every activity, including class participation, increases (Madrid & Pérez, 2001; Mohd, Noor, & Maizatul, 2012).

Negative peer pressure inhibits students' confidence in participation and lowers learners' motivation level (Tatar, 2005). Certain learners may feel embarrassed because of their peers' reactions, which can change considerably the level of their class participation. Even if students have the appropriate English level, they may be afraid of peers' reaction to an incorrect answer or imperfect pronunciation (Aulls, 2004). In spite of having the required oral skills, they may find it difficult to produce the language if they have had prior unpleasant experience (Rollins, 2014). While some students do not pay attention to criticisms from their classmates, others may have a difficult time while reading aloud or sharing an idea (Grossman, 2004).

To sum up, a poorly managed class, combined with the students' personal fears and feelings often makes students avoid participation because of negative past experiences associated with participation (Rocca, 2010). The fear of failing or making mistakes can make students feel anxious, which inhibits students' ability to use and develop their communicative skills in the target language (Aulls, 2004; Allwright et al., 1991).

Methodology

The research approach used in this inquiry was of a qualitative nature. The aim of this case study was to collect data on a topic of interest to come up with an explanation to an observed phenomenon. This facilitated understanding regarding the connection between the problems or issues and the participants by exploring their personal background and prior experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 2014). The data were collected by observing the setting and making an interpretation of the meaning of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 2014; Hartas, 2010). This was done by sitting in classes and observing: a) whether teachers demanded participation from their students; b) whether they participated voluntarily; and c) how often and for how long this happened. Then, the data from the observations was triangulated with input from the interviews and the field notes. The aim was to gather information that would answer the main research question by understanding the setting, and the perceptions of a representative sample of participants (Yin, 2012; Mertens, 2005).

The data collection methods helped us to understand the problem and gain answers to the research questions. The selection of the methods was based on the nature of the issues and objectives (Creswell, 2014; Hartas, 2010). The particular methods used in this qualitative inquiry were non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and field notes.

The type of non-participant observation carried out for this study required attending sitting in a classroom and observing the many aspects of the classroom context such as the environment, the teacher, the student, activities, and interactions. This allowed for a firsthand encounter with the social reality of classroom participation and the EFL students without being part of it. For the interviews, we talked openly with the participants about the topic using specific questions which were relevant to the objectives of the research: the perspective of students on classroom participation and what is needed to motivate students to participate. These semi-structured interviews were flexible and the order of the questions changed while the interview developed (Kanazawa, 2018). Even though some of the questions were somewhat spontaneous, they were connected with the topic. As for the field notes, they were written down on the same observation sheets used as a guide. These notes helped to describe what we heard and saw to create data. An advantage of this method was that it allowed me to write down a considerable amount of information collected during the classroom observation.

We observed the many aspects of the classroom context such as the environment, the teacher, the student, activities, and interactions. We used an observation sheet containing the categories and objectives of the inquiry (Hayward, 2000), which facilitated the emergence of data in answer to the main research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Five two-hour long observations—at different times and days—were

carried out over a period of three weeks in the middle of the semester. They focused on the students and the teacher. Notes were made of what was happening in relation to the participants and the activities, i.e., teacher's actions and responses, and students actions and responses.

Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the participants' perceptions and their realities, as well as capture their concepts regarding the chosen topic. The interviews were of an informal nature in order to focus on the specifics of the conversation (Schuh & Associates, 2009; Kanazawa, 2018; Raworth, Sweetman, Narayan, Rowlands, & Hopkins, 2012). The interview consisted of 12 open-ended questions that explored the participants' perceptions of classroom participation, the difficulties they face in the classroom regarding participation, and the frequency of voluntary and non-voluntary participation in the classroom.

Field notes were also taken down to account for details and document characteristics of the social setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Bailey, 2007). Bailey (2007, p.113) claims that "field notes serve as the repository for the important and even not-so-important data of field research". As stated above, these notes focused on the teacher's actions and responses: demands on students to participate, specific amount of time for classroom participation, clarification before participation, feedback during/and/or after participation, kind of feedback provided, and encouragement to participate. They also focused on the students' actions and responses: frequency of participation, active contributions of the students' points of view and ideas to class discussions, self-initiated participation, focus and interest, cooperativeness and responsiveness, nervousness or reluctance to participate, response to feedback, and disruption and interruptions.

The data analysis process sought situational perspectives to understand the personal experiences of participants (Davies & Hughes, 2014). An open coding system was used. We classified the findings in order to give them a label that represented the phenomenon (Mertens, 2005). We integrated categories and subcategories such as behavior, meanings, and participation. There were four categories: 1) the students' perceptions regarding classroom participation; 2) difficulty on the part of some students to participate in class; and 3) reasons why some students rarely participate while others frequently do so. The subcategories had to do with the questions the interviewees were asked. Then, we put together the data after sorting them out in the open coding. Finally, we chose each category and related it to another to proceed to a more theoretical level of analysis (Allen, 2017; Urquhart, 2013). Constant comparison of data was a fundamental procedure. Coding procedures were used as an analytical technique to examine and link the categories found in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Allen, 2017).

This research study was carried out at a public university in Veracruz, Mexico. A six-level series of English books are used to cover six English courses that are

part of the program. By the end of the last level, students must demonstrate a sound command of English. All professors must include some form of participation as part of their students' final grade. As a matter of school policy, participation accounts for 10% of the students' grades. However, expectations regarding the quality of students' participation, as well as the ways to encourage them to participate are rather vague.

As for the participants, there were 21 male and female participants; their ages ranging between 19 and 23. They were a group of undergraduate students enrolled in the Intermediate English course of a BA in English Language. Purposive sampling strategy was used in this inquiry as it was considered that a certain population would be able to provide rich information and data to analyze (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Four participants were selected for the interviews. Their points of view as expressed in the interviews were analyzed to attempt to discover the meaning of their experience. All the participants gave their consent to participate and to use the information for investigation purposes. Pseudonyms were used instead of their real names to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity.

Findings and Discussion

Before discussing the de-motivational factors that influence students' classroom participation, it is important to know how students define their participation. According to the participants, sharing their opinions, ideas, comments, stories, and knowledge with teachers and peers are ways of being participative in class. They stated that in their English language class, they could transfer their knowledge and apply what they knew by using their speaking skills in the classroom. They added that participation helps them to analyze their mistakes in their spoken English since class participation is mainly based on oral communication. Harry (pseudonyms are used instead of real names) one of the participants, defined participation as follows:

To share with others and the teacher your knowledge or the knowledge that you are acquiring, your opinion, your point of view.

Harry pointed out that participation also involves asking the teacher questions and answering when it is the teachers who ask the students questions. He indicated that verbal interaction between the teacher and the students—which includes listening, responding, making contributions, and sharing stories and experiences—are ways for the students to participate and become involved in the learning process. The above echoes Swain's (1985) claim that participation may demonstrate students' target language competence and their level of confidence when they speak the language.

Since participation is defined as the act of offering comments in class, raising questions, and expressing their interest in the topic (Smith, 1977), it may be argued

that it helps students to explore their knowledge and their skills, and thus, improve their development. In the following extract, Emma, another student interviewed, described one of these benefits:

I think that participation is important because the teacher could be aware of our strengths and weaknesses, as well as correct our pronunciation mistakes.

Emma highlighted that participation leads to important constructive and effective feedback that helps students to be aware of their learning process. This extract resonates with Reifman (2008), who states that feedback helps to empower learners to be judges of their own academic progress and achievement.

Another participant, Ronald, pointed out that classroom participation is mostly seen as a way to improve the students' speaking skills. He added he believed that oral participation in the classroom was important in the learning process of any language. As he explained:

Most people do not practice at home; the only place where they can do so is here, at school. [...] if you do not participate, you cannot improve.

In addition, the participants seemed to believe that classroom participation in their English course helps them to improve their speaking skills and develop their knowledge. They consider that their participation in their English lessons helps them to talk more and be less afraid to share their opinions in future lessons.

Most of the interviewees agreed that participation does not follow a particular pattern. They simply participate more actively when they are interested in the content being discussed. Another participant, Mary, shared:

There are topics that make me speak easily, and when those topics are interesting to me, I research more about them, and then I speak more.

One more issue that emerged was that even though many students appear to understand the benefits of participating in the classroom, there are factors that may demotivate their participation and may cause them to experience negative feelings during the process of learning a foreign language.

It was noticed that some students seemed to regard participation as one of the tasks they are responsible for when learning. Others seemed to believe they had the right to remain silent if they preferred. These views were confirmed in the interviews. Emma, who is of this mind, explained:

I am one of those people who observe and learn. I do not like being participative, I prefer to keep quiet and observe everything around me.

Thus, it may be argued that students who are listeners seem to avoid oral participation because they think they learn more by listening (Mustaphaa, et al. 2010). It was also noticed that the teacher had to ask for volunteers because nobody wanted to participate. Emma remarked:

He asks us to participate but nobody complies, so he decides to ask someone questions.

Dominic, one of the talkative ones, explained:

The teacher has to force us to participate in a certain way because, well, we are few students who sometimes decide to participate.

Some students seemed to understand the importance of participation but did not complete some of the homework activities that were part of the class participation. Harry, for example, who often failed to do his homework, which caused him to feel frustrated by the awareness that he was being irresponsible, explained:

Sometimes I feel frustrated but it is my fault because most of the time, in this particular situation, I cannot participate because I do not do the activities from the workbook.

It would seem, therefore, that their choices as well as their perceptions influence their decision to participate. They are willing to participate if they believe it is their role in the learning process; if not, they remain silent.

When learning a foreign language, a student's journey might be stressful owing to their fear of making mistakes, of not contributing to the class, or even of failing. For example, Molly stated:

I do not see the point in participating because nothing I say is relevant. So, I rather remain silent.

These negative feelings and personal fears, often associated with negative past experiences which may make students avoid participation, are also highlighted by Allwright et al. (1991). Feeling anxious, stressed, or having a very low level of self-confidence appear to be some of the reasons that make students unable to use the target language and participate in the classroom (Tatar, 2005). Harry mentioned what he feels when he participates:

Well, I feel somewhat nervous, I cannot think straight and I do not know what to say. I do not know how to answer or maybe I do, but at that time, my anxiety makes me feel confused.

This lack of self-confidence and nervousness may result in less or no participation at all in their English class. This also appears to happen to students who like or want

to participate but do not want to be corrected in front of their classmates. As Mary mentions:

I mean, I like to participate but I would rather not do it since I speak very softly. When it happens, it is like "we cannot hear you". Then, I panic.

This extract brings to mind Allwright et al. (1991), who state that passive participants tend to be shy, have low self-esteem, or suffer from anxiety.

The teacher's strategies.

The importance of the teacher's role in fostering interaction and participation in L2 class is well documented in the literature. In this study, the students highlighted how the teacher's attitudes, the teacher's strategies to call on participants, and their ability to motivate their students, affects classroom participation.

Molly mentioned that she did not understand the way the teacher demanded participation from the students. She claimed that she did not understand when she was supposed to raise her hand and talk. She said that when she had tried to contribute something to the lesson, the teacher had not paid her any attention. Therefore, as the teacher never asked her to participate, she decided to remain silent because:

I know the teacher is going to choose the same people.

She also seems to think that this might happen because the teacher likes some students more than others, which affects her interest negatively.

I lost the interest to participate, now that I know that he is going to ask the same students. So, I do not see the point in participating if he is not going to ask me. I already lost my interest.

If the teacher does not show the students that their contributions and ideas are important for the class and their learning process, the probability of students' negative response to activities, including class participation, may increase (Peterson, 2001).

In their interviews, the majority of the students claimed that motivation was important in their decision to participate. They showed a tendency to perceive the teacher as the most important part of the interaction inside the classroom. They also seemed to consider the teacher as the source of authority, responsible for generating an adequate learning process (Fritschner, 2000). As Dominic mentioned:

I really believe that he motivates us or gives us that boost to participate and make us be more participative in class. He says, "Come on, let's talk, that is what this class is for. Don't be afraid to make mistakes".

However, during the interviews, a contrast in students' responses was noticed. Some of them were of the opinion that the teacher did not motivate them in the class—that she only asked them to participate—and that, sometimes, she only focused on those who did not talk much. Harry explained:

In this subject, I think that she only said “You! Answer!” and you have to do it. I think that she knows who is always distracted, and she is always pushing them.

This perception seems to be supported by another student's comment, Emma, who mentioned that owing to the teacher's negative attitude, she became uninterested in the class and was often distracted with her cellphone.

I think that sometimes when the teacher gets annoyed, she has a rude attitude. So, most of the time, when we have to participate, I'd rather take out my cellphone.

This echoes Aulls (2004) who claims that participation has emotional consequences. Aulls (2004) states that students are more active participants when they are encouraged, but rather passive when the teachers are not very interested in the students' opinions or ideas, which in turn, leads to negative emotions. In other words, when students feel motivated by the teacher, their level of self-confidence may improve, which in turn may make them less afraid to talk in the classroom.

Conclusion

The present study indicates that all the participants shared common views on participation. Some conclusions that can be drawn from the data analysis and interpretation is that A) the students' perceptions regarding classroom participation and their idea of who should be in charge of their participation were the first problems discovered; B) Most of the participants were not sure about whether or not to participate; they preferred that their teacher choose who to respond to questions; C) as for their perceptions of the classroom participation process, the participants mentioned that they were more likely to participate if the teacher first motivated them.

Nevertheless, neither highly nor poorly motivated students showed a strong tendency towards choosing to participate in class. In other words, it was found that, although the teacher motivated them, this did not ensure the students' participation in the classroom, and thus, it can be argued that, in this case, motivation alone might not guarantee student participation.

Another important finding of this study was there were emotional factors such as frustration, nervousness, lack of interest, stage fear, and anxiety, that affected classroom participation. These emotional factors impact the students' self-esteem and self-confidence. Students are often afraid to participate because they are nervous, or because they think that their contributions to the lesson are not good enough, which makes them feel uncomfortable and inhibits participation.

Finally, the impact of the teacher is very important. According to the observations and interviews, the teacher's attitudes, motivation, and strategies have an effect on the students' interest in participating and on the involvement of each student in the classroom. Most participants indicated that they are more inclined to participate in the classroom when they know their teacher is supportive, open to ideas, and will not criticize them. Raised awareness of issues concerning limited participation in class may help teachers to plan ways to encourage passive or shy students to participate actively in class. For instance, the teacher can stimulate students to share stories, debate relevant current topics, prepare and make short presentations, discuss videos, and discuss news events, among other things.

Recognition of the importance of participation may also stimulate teachers to adopt various strategies to create a favorable learning environment with more interactive and stimulating classroom activities. As an example of these strategies, we can mention the following: identifying and being respectful of students' learning strategies (they might learn better by being quiet and listening), recognizing students' feeling and being empathetic, acknowledging students' strengths and weaknesses, encouraging students to take risks, fostering a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere, giving every students the opportunity to make a contribution to the class, and letting them know that their participation is expected and welcome.

Limitations and Suggestions for further research

This was a small-scale study. Thus, its main limitation was that only a small group of students was interviewed. It must be highlighted that our findings and conclusions are limited to the viewpoints and perceptions of the group of students that participated in this study and cannot be generalized to other contexts.

It would be interesting to explore the experiences of students who are studying the same English level or diverse levels in order to determine if the English level itself, or some other factors, influence the students' lack of participation. This might provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence classroom participation.

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Appendix

Semi-structured interview guide

Length: 15-25 minutes

M ☐ F ☐

Age: _____

Brief interviewer's introduction, and explanation of the purpose of the interview. Once the participant feels comfortable, invite interviewee to briefly introduce him/herself. Prepare the gadget for recording, and then continue with the next questions:

Objective: to know students' perceptions regarding classroom participation

1. Can you explain in your own words what classroom participation is?
 - Can you give an example?
2. What do you think about participation?
 - What are the benefits?
3. Describe how participation is developed in your classroom.
4. How does your teacher call on students to participate in your classroom?
 - Does your teacher give a specific amount of time for classroom participation?
 - Does your teacher motivate students to participate? If so, how?
 - Can you give an example of that?

Why is it difficult for some students to participate in class?

5. Does the teacher make the topic clear before asking for participation?
 - How?
6. Does the teacher give feedback during or after participation?
 - How?
7. How does receiving feedback make you feel? Can you give an example?
8. How would you prefer the teacher to give you feedback: written, oral, personal, general, to correct all your mistakes on the spot, not to correct all your mistakes?

Why do some students rarely participate in class, while others frequently do so?

9. How often do you participate?
10. How often do you participate in the classroom if not called on?
 - Is it easy or difficult for you?
11. How do you feel when you are asked to participate?
 - Do you feel comfortable? Why or why not?
12. Tell me about a time when you had to participate, but you didn't want to.
 - What were you asked to do?
 - How did you feel?
 - Did you feel anxious or nervous? Why or why not?
 - Why do you think you felt like that?
13. Tell me about a time when you wanted to participate, but you could not do it.
 - What were you asked to do?
 - How did you feel?

Did it affect your interest in participation during the rest of the class?

- Why or why not?

**Note: Additional follow-up questions were asked, as appropriate, with each participant.*

Observation sheet

Specific questions:

1. Why is it difficult for some students to participate in class?
2. Why do some students rarely participate in class, while others frequently do?

Date	Observation #:	Teacher:	No. Boys:	No. Girls:
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Classroom sitting arrangement

	Activity	Teacher's actions and responses	Additional field notes
How often does teacher call on students to participate in the classroom.			
Specific amount of time for classroom participation.			
The teacher makes the topic clear before asking for participation.			
The teacher gives feedback during and/or after participation.			
What kind of feedback does the teacher employ?			
The teacher encourages students to give their opinions about the topic			
How often do students participate?			
Do students actively participate in class activities and discussions?			
Do students provide useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion?			

	Activity	Teacher's actions and responses	Additional field notes
Student initiates contribution and asks for input and/or feedback.			
Students are focused and interested.			
Students are cooperative and responsive.			
Students seem nervous or reluctant to participate.			
How do students respond to feedback?			
How often do students participate if not called on?			
Students refuse to Participate.			
Students often disrupt or discourage others' attempts to participate.			

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Awakening sociocultural realities in pre-service teachers through a pedagogy of multiliteracies¹

Despertar las realidades socioculturales en los profesores en formación a través de una pedagogía de las multiliteracidades

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Abstract

Language learning that is grounded on learners' sociocultural realities promises to be a meaningful experience they are likely to treasure when it comes to grappling with practical day-to-day matters. This article reports on a research study aimed at fostering socioculturally constructed language learning in a group of pre-service English teachers. This is a qualitative case study, grounded in a social constructivist paradigm, which draws on a pedagogy of multiliteracies through the Knowledge Process and the Concept of Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) to embrace diverse modes of communication and to expand learners' possibilities of engagement with text and the social and cultural world around them. The findings indicate that while learners are provided with opportunities to explore, reflect and co-construct socioculturally driven knowledge, they are involved in a meaning-making experience that allows them to make sense of the language they are learning. In this way, participants embraced diversity and gained sociocultural understandings by engaging in a pedagogy of Multiliteracies.

Keywords: Sociocultural realities, pedagogy of multiliteracies, pre-service teachers, language learning, design

Resumen

El aprendizaje de una lengua basado en las realidades socioculturales de los educandos promete ser una experiencia significativa que han de atesorar cuando traten de resolver asuntos prácticos de la vida diaria. Este artículo reporta una investigación cuyo objetivo fue fomentar el aprendizaje de una lengua construido socioculturalmente en un grupo de profesores de inglés en formación. Este es un estudio de caso cualitativo apoyado en el paradigma constructivista social, el cual toma como base la pedagogía de las multiliteracidades a través de los Procesos de Conocimiento y el Concepto de Diseño (Cope y Kalantzis, 2009) para incluir diversos modos de comunicación y ampliar las posibilidades de compromiso de los estudiantes con el texto y el mundo social y cultural que los rodea. Los resultados indican que mientras los estudiantes tienen la oportunidad de explorar, reflexionar y co-construir conocimiento promovido socioculturalmente, ellos a la vez se involucran en una experiencia de construcción de significado que les permite dar sentido a la lengua que están aprendiendo. De este modo, los participantes dieron la bienvenida a la diversidad y adquirieron conocimientos socioculturales al involucrarse con una pedagogía de las multiliteracidades.

Palabras clave: Realidades socioculturales, pedagogía de las multiliteracidades, docentes en formación, aprendizaje de lenguas, diseño

Resumo

Aprender uma língua com base nas realidades socioculturais dos aprendentes promete ser uma experiência significativa a ser valorizada quando se lida com questões práticas da vida quotidiana. Este artigo relata uma investigação que visava fomentar a aprendizagem sociocultural de línguas num grupo de professores estagiários de língua inglesa. Este é um estudo de caso qualitativo apoiado pelo paradigma construtivista social, que se baseia na pedagogia multiliteracional através de Processos de Conhecimento e do Conceito de Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) para incluir diversos modos de comunicação e expandir as possibilidades de envolvimento dos estudantes com o texto e o mundo social e cultural que os rodeia. Os resultados indicam que enquanto os estudantes têm a oportunidade de explorar, refletir e co-construir conhecimentos promovidos socioculturalmente, eles ao mesmo tempo dedicam-se a uma experiência de criação de sentido que lhes permite dar sentido à língua que estão a aprender. Desta forma, os participantes acolheram a diversidade e ganharam conhecimentos socioculturais ao envolverem-se com uma pedagogia de multiliteracias.

Palavras chave: Realidades socioculturais, pedagogia do multiliteracia, formação de professores, aprendizagem de línguas, design

Introduction

Sociocultural views of literacy ingrained in meaning constructed in social practice (Street, 2013) have expanded the monolingual, monocultural (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) view of reading and writing, favoring a multiplicity of discourses and welcoming diverse modes of communication. The foreign language classroom has also been viewed as a space beyond verbocentricity (Alvarez Valencia, 2016; Kress, 2000), in which multiliteracy (ML) practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; The New London Group (NLG), 1996) are to be welcomed. Language is thus approached not as the ultimate goal, but as a means for building relationships and making meaning out of experiences lived inside and outside the classroom.

Technology and the new communication landscape have opened avenues for New Literacies (Gee, 1996; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Perry, 2012). These new ways of acting in the world and with the world have reconceptualized what literacy practices are, how they interact and intersect in social events, requiring a different type of engagement with text or, as NLG (1996) posits it, a ML practice. A ML perspective implies a pedagogical approach to literacy (NLG, 1996) that brings possibilities for more inclusive, cultural, linguistic, communicative, and technological diversity in the classroom.

The main contribution of this study is to take on a pedagogy of ML that helps awaken sociocultural realities in pre-service English teachers (PTs). This is done through the Knowledge Process, by means of which they will experience, conceptualize, analyze and apply knowledge gained, at the same time that they are able to use available designs and redesign (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) based on their meaning making experiences.

The studies reviewed in the area of ML (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009; Kalantzis & Cope, 2004, 2008; NLG, 1996) help in the conceptualization to favor language learning that is context-sensitive (Kumaravadivelu, 2001), makes meaning through various modes of communication (Kress, 2010), goes beyond print literacy, and considers diverse semiotic systems (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; O'Rourke, 2015; Perry, 2012).

This qualitative case study (Merriam, 2009), grounded in a social constructivist paradigm (Hua, 2016), aims at fostering socioculturally constructed language learning through a pedagogy of ML. This research is developed with a group of fourteen PTs to help them build a much more meaningful language learning experience. It attempted to answer the following research question: To what extent does a pedagogy of ML contribute to fostering socioculturally constructed language learning?

Following, I present studies on literacies and ML, the research design, findings, conclusion and pedagogical implications.

Literacies and Multiliteracies

So-called literate Western societies have for too long insisted on the priority of a particular form of engagement, through a combination of hearing and sight: with the sense of hearing specialized to the sounds of speech, and the sense of sight specialized to the graphic representation of sounds by “letters”, on flat surfaces (Kress, 2000).

The quote above illustrates a critique to the mere focus on print literacy practices, this is why I consider it a good start for building on the background of literacy. This section attempts to survey the evolution from traditional literacies to multiliteracies, in order to understand and reflect upon the changes undergone by this discipline, and to elucidate its implications for this classroom-driven research.

Literacy

Literacy, defined by Street (2013) as social practices of reading and writing, has undergone shifts with the advance of technology, the different sociocultural changes of a globalized and globalizing world, and the recognition of the role of different modes of communication in the construction of meaning. Nevertheless, its early development was situated between the cognitive (text-level reading comprehension and its linguistic components) and social practices (what readers can do with the texts they approach). Street, as an advocate for reading and writing that has a purpose on people's lives, contrasted *autonomous* and *ideological* models of literacy. The autonomous model assumed literacy to be a set of neutral, decontextualized skills that can be applied in any situation. Literacy is something that one has or does not have; people are either literate or illiterate, and those who are illiterate are deficient. He also advises on the need to avoid such an autonomous model. The ideological model, on the other side, conceptualizes literacy as a set of practices ground in specific contexts. Perry (2012) suggests that “literacy as a situated social practice underpins other theories within the larger umbrella of sociocultural theories on literacy” (p.53). In point of fact, giving context a starring role, recognizing students' realities and background, as well as listening to their voices is essential for meaningful teaching and learning to take place (Ausubel, 1963; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, Mora, 2011).

Additionally, Barton and Hamilton (2000) differentiate between *literacy events* and *literacy practices*. They describe *events* as “observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them” (p. 8); that is, the evidence of people approaching literacy. Practices, in contrast, can be rather unobservable, intangible. Barton and Hamilton (2000) define *practices* as “the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives. What people do with literacy” (p. 8). Thus, how people approach literacy has to do with the practices established,

including power relationships, access to literacy, and the kind of literacy that is related to a specific system of values. Although there may be good in each of the concepts, literacy events and practices are presented as dichotomies in literacy, or extreme forces mediating literacy, which in the pedagogical arena places teachers in a decision-making situation because one is usually presented as bad, traditional, non-social and uncommendable. Our pedagogical practice and research in the classroom will need to ponder situated practices in order to mediate between the two edges, which can be rather complementary. As Mora (2011) argues, “in order to really understand how literacy beliefs and practices continue evolving, it is not just to conceptualize it from theory or from pedagogy” (p. 3).

Subsequently, Mora (2011) points at the difficulty of using the word literacy and establishing its clear meaning, but argues that one meaning that is commonplace among scholars is: “The transition from traditional canonical views of reading and writing to one where multiple forms of expression, technology, alternative and multicultural text have come into play” (p. 3). This is a view that expands our notion of literacy to an inclusive practice derived from the learners’ needs, which can only be possible through the consideration of their own realities, contexts and life experiences.

Furthermore, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) question the fact that “literacy pedagogy has traditionally meant teaching and learning to read and write in page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language” (p. 9); therefore, they “attempt to broaden this understanding of literacy and literacy teaching and learning to include negotiating a multiplicity of discourses” (p. 9). Their approach to literacy provides a broader perspective that includes multiple modes of communication for a multisensory experience at the same time that it considers globalism and diversity. They argue that “we are agents of meaning-making, thus it is essential to use a didactic literacy pedagogy that proposes a deeper approach to reading and interpreting meaning; a much more dynamic view of literacy that considers the design of a variety of texts and ways of communicating” (p. 12). Accordingly, as the study of literacy has embraced multimodality (MM), it has brought the school and home contexts together, permeating social aspects that traditional literacy did not consider. Rowsell and Collier (2017) assert that MM “explains communication as a combination of modes of representation and expression within text designs, including visual, print, gestural, dramatic and oral” (p. 313).

There have been studies about literacies developed in the national Colombian context which urge to develop literacy practices that include local knowledge (Sharkey, 2012) and raise awareness on social and educational issues (Clavijo, 2000, 2003, 2007; Correa, 2010; Mora, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016; Rincon & Clavijo, 2016). Clavijo (2000) as well as Mora (2011) have led the study of literacies, generating in-depth reflection on literacy practices in Colombia. In fact, Clavijo (2000; 2007) has inquired into the role of literacy at different levels of education, reflecting upon primary school

students, pre-service, and in-service teachers' understandings of literacy practices and the need to integrate school subjects to nurture more meaningful literacy practices. Her studies extoll school teachers' work on literacies and how these permeate the school and social contexts, advocating for students' learning needs and sociocultural realities. Likewise, Mora (2011) analyzes the evolution of literacy beliefs and practices of teachers and the need to rethink educational practices; reflect upon understanding the concept of literacy, its historical and pedagogical evolution in teachers and students.

There is also a call for literacy with a purpose, to reflect upon critical consciousness, ideology in textbooks and to foster agency, including city literacies that transform individuals through reflection and advocacy (Mora, 2014, 2015, 2016). Rincon and Clavijo (2016) implemented Community Based Pedagogies as a way to bring literacies closer to students' local realities. They affirm that "the inquiry that students did in their communities unfolded a wide variety of multimodal ways to represent their findings" (p.77), which allowed for meaningful and more context-based language learning. Similarly, Sharkey (2012) discusses teachers' reflection about local realities as a must, in times of educational reforms. She views "language and literacy as situated, cultural practices" (p. 11), thus aligned to students' sociocultural realities, voiced through literacy practices (Rincon & Clavijo, 2016).

Literacy can be viewed as the door through which knowledge, critical thinking, and interpretation of reality is possible if we wish our students to become more intercultural, propositive and reflective citizens. In my view, literacy has to serve a social and reflective purpose inside and outside the classroom. It is not merely about decoding words to 'understand' a text meaning, but it is about using that text to solve real-life situations.

Multiliteracies

ML is a pedagogical approach to literacy developed by the NLG in 1996, which aims to make classroom teaching more inclusive of cultural, linguistic, communicative, and technological diversity. The NLG used the word ML under two important premises: "The multiplicity of communication channels and media, and the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). The goal was to find alternative ways in which literacy pedagogy could fit the changing contexts and realities of today's learners through empowerment and critical decision-making. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) argue that "mere literacy' remains centered on language only... while a pedagogy of ML, by contrast, focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone, which differ according to culture, and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects" (p. 5).

NLG suggests four components of pedagogy as follows: “Situated practice, Overt instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice” (1996, p. 7). These dimensions bring ML closer to the language classroom as they embrace linguistic and non-linguistic aspects, contextual teaching and learning through meaning-making that is considered essential to be able to design our learning experience.

In addressing the question of the ‘what’ of literacy pedagogy, NLG (1996) proposes a metalanguage of ML based on the concept of ‘Design’. Teachers are seen as designers of learning processes and environments. They need creative intelligence to redesign their activities in the very act of practice. Learning and productivity are the result of the designs (structures) of complex systems of people’s environments, technology, beliefs, and texts (p. 19). A pedagogy of ML, and the concept of design are essential elements for the development of this study because they build the conceptual and instructional framework to help PTs make meaning out of ML practices and potentially develop sociocultural awareness.

According to the researchers of NLG (1996), ML “overcome the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students” (p. 60). Michelson and Dupuy (2014) back up this idea through the development of a project based on a pedagogy of ML in a language class. They suggest that “ML pedagogies have been taken up both as curricular reform projects as well as instructional techniques” (p.25). Adding to this, social semiotics is important to the world of ML as an approach to communication that seeks to understand how people communicate by a variety of means in particular social settings. Michelson and Alvarez Valencia (2016) affirm that “social semiotics delves into how meanings are made and structured in processes of communication and semiotic acts and products are constituted and shaped through historical, cultural, and social uses of signs” (p.2). One essential aspect of social semiotic theory is the principle that modes of communication offer historically specific, socially and culturally shared options or semiotic resources for communicating (Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Research done in the area of ML has permeated first and second language acquisition, as well as a variety of contexts. Works developed in students’ first language (Hepple et al., 2014; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Luke, 2000; Meng, 2016) have implemented pedagogical practices that consider technology, literature, and social realities to provide meaningful pedagogical experiences. Moreover, the foreign language teaching field has benefited from the advances in ML for students’ critical engagement and cultural awareness (Boche, 2014; NLG, 1996; Dooley, 2009; Freedman & Carver, 2007; Fukunaga, 2006; Jacobs, 2013; Michelson, 2018; Michelson & Dupuy, 2014; Olthouse, 2013). Other works that have considered a pedagogy of ML have integrated digital practices (Amicucci, 2014; Carita, Mäkinen & Coiro, 2013) and sociocultural realities (Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Curwood & Cowell, 2011; De la Piedra, 2010), including the

project carried out by Nieto (2018) who suggests the integration of students' realities based on a theory of community-based pedagogies.

In the local Colombian context, some studies have drawn on a ML perspective (Alvarez Valencia, 2016; Areiza et al., 2014; Losada & Suaza, 2018; Medina et al., 2015). In this way, Colombian authors have explored a ML approach from a community perspective to make sense out of reading practices that include technology and diverse social semiotic resources toward the construction of meaning (Alvarez Valencia, 2016; Areiza, et al., 2014; Lozada & Suaza, 2018). As an example, Medina et al. (2015) turn to ML to help their students read their communities critically so as to transform their lives. The previous studies are meaningful illustrations of how the foreign language classroom has become a vehicle to explore students' realities through meaningful context-driven ML practices.

Research Design

This study is grounded in a social constructivist paradigm, for meaning is constructed subjectively and "intercultural differences and cultural memberships are socially constructed" (Hua, 2016, p. 12). This view aligns with the idea of learning for life and the construction of knowledge through experience (Honebein, 1996). Social constructivism, as an epistemological perspective, informs this study because it nurtures participants' knowledge construction, based on their sociocultural realities, by engaging them in ML practices.

This study is carried out based on a pedagogy of ML (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; NLG, 1996), in which the enormous shifts in the ways in which people make meaning in the contemporary communications environment are accentuated. As such, a ML perspective is underpinned by a social constructivist epistemology, given it understands learning as a negotiation and construction of meanings. This work is approached from a qualitative interpretive case study perspective to gain a deep understanding and provide a "detailed description and analysis" (Creswell, 2012, p. 481) of the understanding participants have, while experiencing a pedagogy of ML, fostered in their sociocultural realities. In this line of thought, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that "qualitative data can provide insight into human behavior" (p. 106). Moreover, Merriam (2009) presents case study as "one type of qualitative research that searches for meaning and understanding; the researcher being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 39-40). The bounded system in this research is the specific group of PTs who make part of this study.

Context and participants

This study was carried out during an academic term at a State University in Colombia with a group of fourteen PTs who were part of a reading class. Some of the activities developed during the academic term were part of the data collection instruments, therefore, everyone enrolled in the course participated in the study. Nonetheless, participants signed an informed consent form in which they were explained about the data that would be collected out of the activities developed and how their anonymity would be ensured. The group was made up of nine women and five men, and their ages ranged between 18 and 24 years old. My positionality as a teacher-researcher was that of a participant observer, helping PTs in their meaning-construction experience; I was also involved in proposing, designing and developing ML activities with them and in collecting evidence that helped answer the research question of the study.

Data collection instruments

I collected data during an academic term, in which I built on PTs' concept of ML and the rationale behind it. Then, I drew on a pedagogy of ML through the *Knowledge Process*³; reframed by Cope and Kalantzis (2009) into acts for learning, as follows: Experiencing (becoming immersed in new situations); Conceptualizing (connecting concepts); Analyzing (evaluating one's perspectives); and Applying (putting knowledge into practice) (See figure 1), while encouraging participants to explore, reflect, and enact new knowledge. Additionally, the concept of design gave participants tools to put ML into practice, while using available designs or redesigning, based on their own interests and needs.

The following activities allowed for data collection that was later on interpreted through content analysis (Patton, 2002), in order to organize, document and analyze participants' meaning construction processes. (1) Scaffolding on ML: This was made up of two articles and a video to know the critical and contextual tenets of literacy (Perry, 2012), as well as the "why", "what" and "how" of ML (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), and the resources and possibilities that a pedagogy of ML brings to a language class. (2) Imagery: A series of images to notice, describe, and voice sociocultural realities (Corbett, 2010). (3) Reading our campus: Noticing literacies written through graffiti, poetry, drawings, and other artifacts. (4) Survey: To unveil perceptions from the reading our campus project.

3 NLG original terminology: "Situated practice, Overt instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice" (1996, p. 7).

Findings

Learning is to be related to context and reality, thus grounded on specific needs for it to be a meaningful experience; this is why, language teachers are encouraged to see the particular, practical, and possible (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), or the sociocultural realities taking place in our classrooms. That is, our philosophy of language teaching and learning is to inform our dos in the classroom, always including students as agents who can contribute to their own learning processes. Following, I present a descriptive, then analytic discussion of each of the moments of the study:

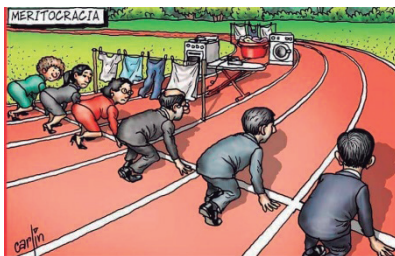
Scaffolding on ML – We read the article *What is literacy* (Perry, 2012). This was the first approximation to the topic and allowed participants to understand how literacy practices are to be mediated by our sociocultural endeavors, presented in a variety of modes and thought of in a critical manner to deconstruct paradigms and re-construct realities, based on the readers' schemata. As teachers to be, one important element we drew upon was literacy instruction, which started raising awareness on how we access and process information and how we could help others do the same.

Following, we read *ML, new literacies, new learning pedagogies* (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), which is concerned with new approaches to literacies teaching and learning. Within an educational perspective, the authors establish the “why”, “what” and “how” of ML and present a broad landscape which allowed PTs to reflect upon the benefits of adopting a pedagogy of ML; that is, not only for their current language learning process, but also for their future as teachers. This last article was accompanied by the video *Representation, communication and design*, which is one of a series of videos that Cope & Kalantzis present to illustrate on ML and the concept of design. This one was chosen in particular because it does a good liaison between ML and the concept of design, and provides an overview of how we approach texts, and understand them, using all our senses and schemata.

Imagery – Following Corbett's (2010) intercultural language activities, PTs were exposed to a series of images to make them reflect about sociocultural realities. They discussed how each image could potentially describe reality, and in which specific contexts. This generated class discussion and participants were able to voice their perceptions about the images they observed. I named each image as a probing question, then I proposed to reflect upon the topic through a *think, pair, share* activity. This allowed participants to first think to themselves, then get in pairs to compare their initial ideas and build arguments to support their views; and then, as a group, share their positions in front of the class.

Figure 1. Have you ever experienced this?

<https://blogs.iadb.org/igualdad/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2020/01/caricatura-meritocracia.jpg>



Female participants, eager to indicate women's role in today's society, mostly led the discussion. I selected some of their comments, which they provided to illustrate the slight changes we have experienced in gender roles from previous generations to today, nonetheless remarking the commonly heavier load women still have today. They stated: *Women find more obstacles than men because the later commonly find the road clearer. Regarding job search, women sometimes are not hired because they have kids, thus they might get late to work or because the maternity leave is longer now. Even if we do not have kids, we have to wash our own clothes, cook, clean our rooms, and so on; men, however, usually rely on a woman to do that. There is usually their mom, an aunt, grandma, or someone there to help them.*

Another view point was mentioned: *I have a different experience. I have my mom, dad, and one brother. When I was growing up, my mom requested everyone to do part of the chores; for this reason, my brother did chores the same as I did.*

One of the male participants said: *some people have more possibilities and find it easier to reach their goals; this is not only gender-based. There are other issues behind equality. I think that the times when men had higher positions and earned better salaries than women have been left behind. Nowadays, many women have surpassed men.* This view made everyone reflect about other social issues that mediate male and female relationships; they were also able to think about other kind of inequalities lived beyond gender differences.

Other participants said: *I haven't had such an experience of being discriminated against during job search because I am still a student, but there are parents and grandparents who still hold marked gender discrimination. For example, my grandfather is of the idea that if he works he cannot wash his dish or his clothes. These ideas depend on age and the way they were raised. Women are commonly guilty of this chauvinist behavior and ideas when they do not allow men to do chores.* This variety of experiences exposed participants to different viewpoints, and to expand their perceptions, thus,

we could conclude that no matter the circumstances in which gender inequality takes place, this gap is to be bridged every day with more actions than discourse.

Figure 2. What would your parents say?

<https://cdn4.vectorstock.com/i/1000x1000/25/03/playing-against-gender-stereotypes-vector-22012503.jpg>



This image burst participants' desire to speak. They had very elaborate stories, which they were happy to share. Both female and male agreed on a marked difference between them and their parents or grandparents. The arguments given were embedded in narratives of how they had been raised, what the adults in their families had told them, and the informed decisions they were able to make today because of their social and cultural experiences outside their homes.

These stories could be classified as follows:

Gender roles beyond toys: *I have told my daughter that she does not have to play with dolls just because she is a girl; not necessarily. Thinking that a boy will become girly because he plays with dolls is very close-minded and this makes women and men chauvinist. Once I saw a boy who wanted to play with a doll and his father told him to stop playing with that because he was not a gay person; the little kid was puzzled, he did not even understand what gay meant.*

Gender roles encouraged by career choice: *There are some gender roles in society which do not allow men to do what women do and vice versa. If a woman does something that is socially established to men, it is said that she is not feminine. The arts, for example, are mostly restricted to women. If a man does theater or dance, he might be stigmatized. Women studying engineering here at the university are said to be to be manlike.*

What media sells: *Kids also watch TV announcements that promote certain behaviors. Although these announcements do not completely reflect today's gender views, commerce stigmatizes women. Women are commonly offered to buy or given as presents*

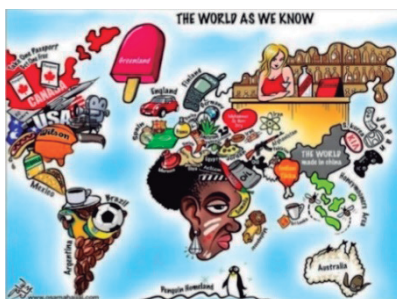
things like irons, pots or washing machines, while men are invited to buy cars. A text message was sent to clients of the same supermarket; the husband received a message inviting him to buy beer at half price, while the wife received a message inviting her to buy detergent. For example, giving girls these dolls that are to be fed creates in them the awareness of women role just as the ones who nurse and raise children.

Discourse shaping behavior: Many people say that men don't cry; they have to be strong and women are weak. I think that this makes us generalize the behavior of men and women. The difference that is made in genders comes from childhood and is reflected when we are adults. We should raise our kids as equal. As grown-ups we are not treated equal either because if a man has more than one woman, he is a macho, but if a woman has more than one man she is a ***; thus I think that society stigmatizes.

The choice of toys given to kids in the image gave participants the opportunity to bring up realities they have experienced at home or with people they know. They are extremely aware of the influence that our family beliefs, discourse and media has on us; nonetheless, being at university has contributed to changing their mindset.

Figure 3. Where wouldn't you like to go?

<https://image.slidesharecdn.com/icclesson-150610071542-lva1-app6892/95/icc-lesson-stereotypes-1-638.jpg?cb=1433920592>



It was not easy for participants to answer this question because, as they mentioned, they were used to thinking of their favorite place to visit, not the opposite. When found on the spot, most of them stated that they would love to go anywhere, nevertheless, a few mentioned specific places they would not like to visit and provided reasons based on what they had heard other people say or mostly watched and read on the news. After listening to their arguments, we discussed about how media is or not likely to inform us in an objective and reliable manner, and how listening to only one part of the story, from an outsider's perspective, might not grant us with all the necessary elements to build an argument. Some of the examples provided were:

I wouldn't like to go to Afghanistan because of what one perceives about war; nonetheless, it is the referent we have, what has been sold to us. Media has generalized that Colombians are traffic dealers or that Colombian women are easy. What happens in other countries could be the same, generalized because of the news we hear. I wouldn't go to the Middle East because of the way women are perceived there; they might not allow me to show my face or I will have to wear a dress; women are too subjugated there. I wouldn't like to go to USA because although this is a country with beautiful landscapes, it is ruled by bad people who want development at the expense of wars, poverty and pollution. Even though some of them would prefer not to visit certain places, they were also aware that much of this information had been subjectively provided to them, and it might not be completely true.

Other participants, on the opposite, affirmed: *Not wanting to go to a place is not having the chance to know about their culture and what they have to show. When foreigners come to Colombia they fall in love with it because they find out that it is not just what media tells.* We concluded that we know very little about other places; thus we should not draw conclusions based on a few facts or limited information we have received.

Figure 4. Who would you give the job to?

<https://crestresearch.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Using-Stereotypes-To-Prepare-For-Interviews-1170x821.jpg>



This image did not generate much discussion because it was hard for PTs to think as employers, however they were very open to difference and provided the following answers. *I wouldn't judge people because of their physical appearance or culture, but will probably give them a test to know each person's skills for the job. I would also give the job to the most skillful person, no matter their beliefs.* On the opposite, one of the PTs expressed: *if image six is a catholic teacher, I would prefer to hire her, although they all deserve to be listened to and given the job opportunity.* All in all, their perceptions about the situations illustrated in the images somehow relates to their initial education and family ties, but there are conscious decisions they have made in how they see others,

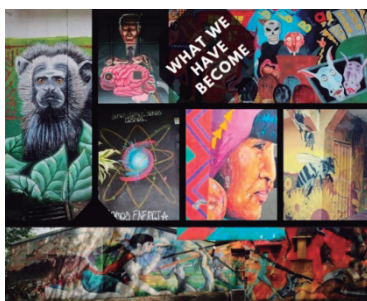
which are the result of their university education and the new social roles established as part of the social groups they now belong to.

Reading our campus

To develop the project around campus, I gave PTs examples of ML practices and asked them to think about moments in which they had approached them. They were then encouraged to work collaboratively to find literacy expressions around campus. They designed and presented posters explaining the process lived, the reasons to choose the pictures taken, and the analysis of their findings. They chose to collect information on graffiti, clothing, messages in the girls' and boys' restrooms, food, ideology in street art, and expressions of knowledge and power. In this way, they could see our campus with new eyes, explore linguistic and sociocultural practices through ML, and make sense of the language they are learning.

Participants lived the *knowledge process* because they *experienced* the language through the expressions they found and because of the appropriation they made of those expressions in English. They *applied* when using the language to express their feelings along the project. They *conceptualized* by becoming aware of the environment around them, and by learning to read their campus with other eyes. They also *analyzed* by preparing a report and by reporting in front of the class, by answering questions from their partners and me, and by reflecting about their findings, stating a position of what they had experienced, as well as by acknowledging the learning derived from the project. Following, I present a series of pictures with the title, conceptualization and analysis done by participants:

Figure 5. What we have become



[Picture taken by PTs]

At the beginning of everything, we were just atoms, energy, we were part of something, we were one; through the years, we were advancing in everything, species, communities, civilizations, countries, but we have lost our culture and forgot our gods,

mother nature. The industry to make money, has made us kill lots of species. Is this what we want for our future generations? The change we need is education.

Figure 6. Politician's plague



[Picture taken by PTs]

This piece of art expresses how the government works and the raw truth of the way the plague of important men does what they want with the Law and resources.



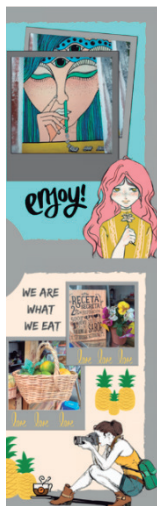
Figure 7. This is what we are

[Picture taken by PTs] *This picture makes us think about nature, and how we act against this one, nature does not belong to us, we belong to nature.*



Figure 8. Our restrooms talk

[Picture taken by PTs]



We think that people who write in the restrooms do it because they cannot express themselves outside. They have a lot to share or to complain about, but cannot do it because they are shy or they are afraid to talk in public. Women usually write about freedom, unity, and self-love. For example: *Mujer no estás sola; No más feminicidios; Feminista resisite; Me amo como la tierra al sol.* Men, on the other hand, talk about political issues or send messages to girls they like. For example: *Congreso de los pueblos; vamos al poder; Nico te necesita.*

Image 9. We are what we eat

[Picture taken by PTs]

There's stigma towards public university students; people usually think we are only interested in doing drugs and marching against everything, but most of us are just addicted to learning. We also have the graffiti in the entrance of the university which shows how there are many people outside, but only a few have the opportunity to enter. The picture of the fruits shows how our university is changing. Now students can have a proper diet and get income here.

The posters presentation, as seen in the pictures below, was an opportunity to know how each participant analyzed the campus and to also get to know places around us.

Each group concentrated on diverse images and only a few coincided on taking pictures of the same. On top of that, PTs' analysis of the literacy expressions found on campus portrayed their sociocultural understanding of issues that they related to the reality lived by public universities and by the country as well. They reflected about inequality, starving children, war, insecurity, cultural values and roots lost, disconnection from mother nature, freedom, politics, unity, the need for acceptance or the desire to be oneself, inclusion of diversity, university students beyond stigma and the need for education.

There was reflection about the aspects mentioned through PTs' critical views. This exercise prompted discovery and empowerment in all participants who acknowledged having a new view of their campus now, thanks to the detailed reading they had done around it. Many issues were raised, which awoke several realities they were not aware of and that brought up the desire for changing what they did not find right.

Survey

Once participants presented the *reading our campus* projects, they completed a questionnaire whose purpose was to reflect about the experiences lived. I classified their answers and drew categories of analysis (Cohen et al., 2007) to establish commonalities and differences among their perceptions and gains.

In the first question, PTs talked about the type of literacy expressions and art pieces selected and the reason for choosing them. Among the most remarkable reasons to choose their projects, they mentioned the desire to learn about: variety, personality traits, people's likes and interests, meaning construction about reality, rebellion against the political and educational systems, empowerment and identity construction. PTs' topics of interest were aligned to the critical positions they commonly have in class, thus knowing and analyzing those topics gave them more elements to voice their perceptions.

The next question invited participants to analyze the literacy expressions or art pieces chosen. They expressed how any space can be owned through arts and how graffiti make walls talk. They also called for acceptance of our roots, open-mindedness, female empowerment, promote critical thinking and the study of literature. These topics encouraged reflection about the sociocultural reality we live in our campus and motivated thoughts about different ways of thinking and acting, which make part of one community.

Question three revealed the experience and challenges lived by PTs while developing their projects. They mentioned that it was pleasant and easy to find art expressions, mostly because they could choose the topics to talk about, but it was hard to talk to people or to take pictures of them; they felt uneasy at the beginning, but gained self-assurance as they learned how to do it. Among the positive experiences,

they highlighted how people go against trends or have different viewpoints, which contributes to diversity. They also acknowledged how this project expanded their language skills in the process of developing, analyzing and reporting their findings.

Finally, participants reported the new perceptions of their campus developed as a result of having carried out this project. The main gains were in terms of making meaning out of what is written on our campus walls, in the expressions of people, in the need to voice their likes and interests through clothing; and in the ability to relate arts and literacy expressions to current live experiences, to reality.

Conclusion and pedagogical implications

A ML approach (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) is a bridge towards a socially-constructed intercultural experience in the language classroom because of the possibilities it brings to language learners to use diverse modes of communication, which unveil the cultural and social realities that surround them. Through a pedagogy of ML, PTs were able to develop a learning process that made them explore, reflect and use knowledge in the real world, thus having the opportunity to embrace diversity, reflect upon language-cultural experiences and gain sociocultural understandings.

Bringing reality closer to PTs helped localize (Canagarajah, 2005) knowledge and build meaningful learning. This project supported on a theory of language that is socioculturally constructed and socioculturally experienced helped participants reflect upon their own sociocultural practices and uncover those of people around them. This is a way to reassure the notion that it is always possible to construct meaning and to make the language classroom a space for the recognition of our own cultural practices, the acknowledgement of the other, and the raising of tolerance. The knowledge process helped me organize the steps that I wanted PTs to walk through; by this means, I better engaged them in creating, experiencing, and living the language.

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Implementing lesson plans for collaborative learning with children in an EFL context¹

Implementación de planes de clase para
el aprendizaje colaborativo con niños
y niñas en un contexto de inglés como
lengua extranjera

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Abstract

In this article, we describe a case study research conducted to validate a set of lesson plans specifically designed for collaborative work with children. A group of nine teachers implemented the lessons in their classes. Data were gathered by means of ethnographical notes to determine children's reactions to collaborative work. Class observations and surveys to teachers on their perception of the lesson plans and collaborative learning were used to collect the data. Results show that children can indeed work in collaboration when given the adequate conditions. This kind of work among children helps them to negotiate meanings and find solutions for learning spaces. Implications point in the direction of teacher education programs that can help teachers understand the principles and practices of collaborative learning with children.

Key words: collaborative work; collaborative room; interaction; technology-supported input; negotiation in children; collaborative learning spaces; children's reaction to collaboration

Resumen

Diferentes autores han argumentado que el trabajo colaborativo entre los niños les ayuda a negociar significados y a encontrar soluciones para el aprendizaje. En este artículo, describimos un estudio realizado para validar un conjunto de planes de lecciones diseñados específicamente para el trabajo colaborativo con niños en espacios de aprendizaje colaborativo. Un grupo de nueve maestros implementó las lecciones en sus clases. Los datos se recopilaban mediante notas etnográficas para determinar las reacciones de los niños al trabajo colaborativo. Además, los maestros respondieron un cuestionario sobre su percepción de los planes de lecciones y el aprendizaje colaborativo. Los resultados muestran que los niños pueden trabajar en colaboración cuando se les dan las condiciones adecuadas. Las implicaciones apuntan en la dirección de los programas de educación docente que pueden ayudarlos a comprender los principios y prácticas del aprendizaje colaborativo con los niños.

Palabras clave: trabajo colaborativo; sala colaborativa; interacción; input respaldado por tecnología; negociación en niños; espacios de aprendizaje colaborativos; reacción de los niños a la colaboración

Resumo

Diferentes autores têm argumentado que o trabalho colaborativo entre as crianças ajuda-os a negociar significados e a encontrar soluções para a aprendizagem. Neste artigo, descrevemos um estudo realizado para validar um conjunto de planos de lições desenhados especificamente para o trabalho colaborativo com crianças em espaços de aprendizagem colaborativo. Um grupo de nove professores implementaram as lições em suas aulas. Os dados se recopilaram mediante notas etnográficas para determinar as reações das crianças ao trabalho colaborativo. Além disso, os professores responderam um questionário sobre a sua percepção de dos planos de lições e a aprendizagem colaborativa. Os resultados mostram que as crianças podem trabalhar em colaboração quando se lhes dão as condições adequadas. As implicações apontam na direção dos programas de educação docente que podem ajudá-los a compreender os princípios e práticas da aprendizagem colaborativa com as crianças.

Palavras chave: Trabalho colaborativo; sala colaborativa; interação; input apoiado por tecnologia; trabalho colaborativo em crianças; aprendizagem colaborativa; negociação nas crianças; espaços de aprendizagem colaborativa; reação das crianças à colaboração

Introduction

In recent years, interest in researching methodologies or techniques to improve learning in the classrooms has increased, giving way to collaborative work, which is one of the latest learning techniques that emerges from the communicative approach to language teaching (Gjergo & Samarxhiu, 2011). Collaborative learning is a situation where one or more students learn or try to learn something together. In this sense, the traditional teacher-student relationship is redefined to allow groups of students to work together to seek understanding, meaning, or solutions for learning. Jacobs, Power and Loh (2002) define collaborative learning as the principles and techniques for helping students work together more effectively.

Working in collaboration with others brings different advantages for children. First, the ideas and opinions of peers stimulate children's response since they are exposed to the individual perceptions that others may have of a problem or a situation. These perceptions reflect:

the different personalities and particular abilities of other members of the group make for an interactive exchange that will help to broaden and deepen individual children's understanding. Moreover, the experience of collaborative learning facilitates the child's social and personal development, and the practice of working with others brings children to an early appreciation of the benefits to be gained from co-operative effort. (The stationery office of Dublin, 1999, p. 17).

Connected to the beforementioned idea about the possible benefits of collaborative children's learning, Barkley, Major, and Cross (2014) also pointed out three qualities that characterize collaborative learning. They initially considered that collaborative learning tasks should be organized systematically; that is, rather than having learners get together to work, collaborative activities need to have a useful purpose. An additional element they referred to is that each participant is required to take part and contribute to the activities planned. Finally, Barkley et. al. put forward the fact that collaborative learning needs to be meaningful to facilitate and support the achievement of the learning objectives.

Given the advantages of collaborative learning, we set out to investigate the usefulness and benefits of different lesson plans specifically designed for the small group collaborative learning rooms at Idiomas Eafit. The institution counts with five collaborative spaces that have been somewhat neglected due to teachers' lack of knowledge and experience in using such spaces and in techniques to foster collaboration among students. Three spaces function as small group collaboration rooms, another as the crafts room, and the other as the pedagogical kitchen.

The layout of the *small group collaboration rooms* highlights group learning. The rooms count with three large group tables fixed to the floor with moveable seating (rolling chairs) designed to aid and encourage collaborative work. Each table is accompanied by a laptop with access to the Internet and a flat screen monitor to display content and student work. Monitors also offer surrounded sound. There is also a whiteboard wall that covers most of the room and that allows teachers to write 360° information. The acoustics of the space offers a free-noise environment (see Figure 1).

The *crafts room* presents opportunities to students for developing varied artistic interests. It is equipped with a screen monitor and a laptop with access to the Internet. As in the collaborative room, there is a whiteboard wall wrapping most of the area. The room also contains a variety of chairs and trapezoid tables on casters aimed at facilitating movement and fostering different grouping techniques. To keep material, the room offers an art supply storage closet (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Small Group Collaboration Room (own photo)

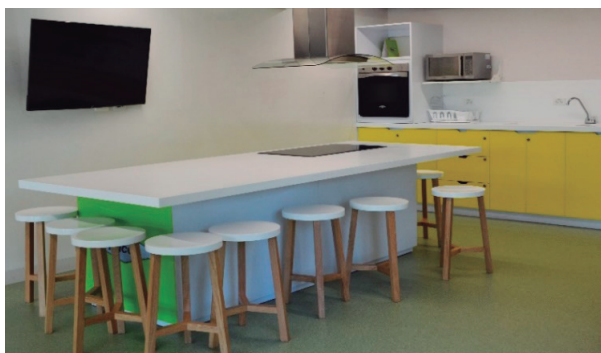


Figure 2. Crafts Room (own photo)



The pedagogical kitchen is an area intended to offer authentic material for the teaching and learning different foreign languages. It aims at developing the learners' cultural and communicative competences by engaging them in an experiential context that involves a real-world situation as the act of cooking. The kitchen is furnished with storage cabinets, open shelves, a counter, a sink, and an island located in the middle of the space with high stools around it. It is equipped with a refrigerator, a microwave, an oven, a digital stove fitted in the island, varied appliances and a wide selection of kitchen tools. The space also counts with a screen monitor, Internet connection, and a whiteboard wall (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Pedagogical Kitchen (own photo)



The difference between a traditional classroom and a collaborative room can be established as follows: In a traditional classroom, all desks are either facing the board and the teacher's desk or arranged in a semi-circle. Both layouts promote teacher-centered classes since they encourage focus on the instructor, the content, and they can be implemented with large groups without any difficulties. For instance, a seating arrangement in rows may be chosen to improve information dissemination, whereas an arrangement in small groups, as in a collaborative room, may be chosen to promote student interactions (McCorskey & McVetta, 1978 cited in Gremmen et al., 2016).

The disadvantage of a row arrangement is that the teacher is distant from the students sitting in the last rows. This population is more likely to be distracted and lose attention. As a result, disengagement is expected to happen. In a language lesson where conversation and interaction enable learners to put into practice communicative needs, a traditional classroom design makes it hard for the instructor to move around the audience, participation seems to decrease and group involvement fosters one-way interaction (Brown & Long, 2006). In contrast, the seating arrangement in a collaborative room fosters the flow of oral interactions since students are most likely to interact with each other in a more fluent way, and they are also most likely to improve

their language skills, specially speaking (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, the dynamics of a language class, the learning objectives and the characteristics of the population match the design of collaborative rooms.

The evolution of the classroom from a fixed physical space into a dynamic learning environment has been possible thanks to changes in teaching methods and new understandings of learning strategies and styles. This fact draws attention to the concept of the collaborative classroom. Nilsson (2016) states “the design of the collaborative classroom emphasizes group learning” (p.3). Typically, tables enable small groups to sit and work together, unlike the rows of desks associated with factory model schools of last century. Each group has ready access to the Internet, multimedia displays and collaboration software. The group tables, shared table-top displays, and wall displays with unrestricted lines of view, are the most common characteristics of the collaborative classroom. Han, Leong and Nair (2014) also elaborate on the advantages of the collaborative learning environment stating that

Interactive classroom technologies provide an ideal learning environment for students and provide support for alternative learning paradigms. Facilitators are able to use technology as a tool or vehicle to engage students and to improve the quality of learning. Thus, there is a clear educational rationale to justify the development of interactivity tools and technology-rich learning spaces. (p. 274).

Based on the characteristics of collaborative rooms, the main objective of the work presented in this article is to validate a set of lesson plans designed to foster collaboration among children aged 5 and 8 who were enrolled in courses 1A, 2A, 1B and 2B of the English program for children at Idiomas Eafit. This program falls within the definition of teaching English as a foreign language and is framed under the communicative approach. The methodology privileges the active and creative participation in meaningful, playful, and authentic communicative activities among the actors of the process: participants, parents, teachers, people of the community, etc. The tools to implement this methodology are audiovisual materials (posters, audio, video, games, texts, etc.) and educational technology such as the computer laboratory and educational online platforms. The programs are designed taking into consideration the age, cognitive development, and proficiency level of each participant in the target language.

Literature Review

Learning is a social activity that involves language, real world situations, interaction and collaboration among learners (Bawa & Suleiman, 2015). These authors claimed that collaborative learning is a process of peer interaction that is mediated

and structured by the teacher. Collaboration thus implies that both the learner and the teacher contribute and take insights out of the class encounter. The more they communicate, the more they create knowledge using language in a social context.

Collaborative learning has been defined in different ways. For instance, Swain (2000, cited in dos Santos Lima, 2011) defined the notion of collaborative dialogue as the act where the participants are involved in knowledge construction and problem solution through means of creating relations and exchanging ideas. The author argued that while collectively working towards a common goal, individuals are able to establish meaningful connections which draw them to understand each other and find ways to solve problems.

Dillenbourg (1999) described collaborative learning as a “situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together” (p. 1). In his definition, *two or more people* can range from a pair or a small group with three to five learners until a community of thousands or millions of people. To *learn* is understood as the act of attending a course, studying the teaching materials, participating in the learning activities, or the gradual gathering of lifelong experiences. *Together* connotes various types of interaction, such as face-to-face interaction, interaction mediated by computer, whether or not it is a shared accomplishment, and if the work is organized in a systematic way.

Another definition of collaborative learning is provided by Gokhale (1995) who defined it as a method of instruction where two or more students of different performance levels come together to work on a shared objective. They are in charge of both their learning and their peers’ progress. Therefore, collaborative learning activities help the success of each other. According to Song (2011) collaborative learning is a kind of learning style carried out in a group where participants are able to solve problems and gain understanding through “consultation, discussion, and competition.” A typical collaborative learning process, states Song, values interaction as a major source of learning activities since efforts between learners and instructors encourage reciprocal progress. Additionally, learners create a group structure that leads them to the achievement of a common goal. Another circumstance adding to the collaborative process draws attention to the learner’s own responsibility in front of the working tasks. Finally, a group target must be reached so that the collaborative learning can be ended; that is, all group members have attained the goal.

Collaborative learning as concerned with younger students had its roots in ideas of socio-cognitive conflict (Doise & Mugny, 1984; Piaget, 1932, 1985). This view posits that disagreement with one or several peers over a task that involves learning could encourage intellectual activity and ensue progress (Azmitia, 2000; Clark et al. 2003; Howe & Tolmie, 1998). That is, children are able to acquire knowledge throughout their social interactions with a person of the same age.

According to Tunnard and Sharp (2009), collaborative learning occurs when children work together to achieve a common goal or to solve a problem. The authors reported that many quantitative studies of learning behaviors and outcomes have indicated that collaboration between peers can help children to develop their knowledge, language, and social skills. The authors also conducted a study of children's views of collaborative learning in a sample of 16 children (eight boys and eight girls), year 5/6, where the use of collaborative learning across the curriculum with the daily use of team-orientated tasks was actively promoted. The findings revealed that several children held that collaboration facilitated their comprehension of new ideas even though they did not give their best to work in groups. Besides, children favored self-selection as a process for determining group composition. Some of the children also valued the importance of individual skills for collaboration and they believed that social skills were linked to personality. As a final point, children stressed the view of working together as an important way to establish and maintain friendships.

To summarize thus far, collaborative learning is one of the teaching methods where learners work together to understand a concept, develop a product, or solve a problem. Group members take part to ask for information, assess ideas, and keep track of their work in collaboration. Even though performing a joint effort, each member is responsible for and accountable to each other. Collaborative learning can either follow the form of face-to-face communication or make use of computer-assisted platforms. It fosters a context where members collaborate by sharing experiences and taking on different roles. Thus, collaborative learning holds social, academic, and psychological advantages.

Collaborative learning requires teachers and students to play characteristic roles. As far as teachers are concerned, Larrañaga (2012) and Gokhale (1995) asserted that instructors need to stay away from the traditional knowledge transmission model who passes on information. Instead, teachers need to function as mediators for learning or managers of tasks (Smith & MacGregor, 1992; Gerlach, 1994) by fostering significant learning experiences that might connect learners to the real world (Mukkonen, Lakkala, & Hakkarainen, 2005 cited in Larrañaga, 2012).

Collazos, Guerrero, and Vergara (2001) affirmed that teachers should take three different roles: instruction designer, cognitive mediator, and instructor. According to these authors, the teacher as an instructor designer is in charge of creating interesting learning contexts and tasks that help learners associate new with stored information. The cognitive mediator is responsible for asking questions that seek to verify learners' understanding. The instructor is in control of monitoring, intervening, coaching, evaluating, giving instructions and explaining the structure of the collaborative work and the social abilities related to it.

Regarding the students' role, Larrañaga (2012) contended that a collaborative approach engages learners in a situation of responsibility for their own learning.

In other words, learners need to recognize the value of their capacities to guide their thoughts and behaviors to reach goals and solve problems within the team. They establish the learning objectives and decide on the importance of particular problems. In this new role, students also benefit from a strong network of group support and direction where they learn from peers more than they do from teachers (Santamaria, 2005). Additionally, McInnerney and Roberts (2003), asserted that each student is viewed individually even though working in collaboration. If they hand in an assignment, for instance, “they present themselves, not the small group they work in” (Holm, 2018, p. 19).

With reference to the role of technology, Domalewska (2014) suggests that collaborative learning is founded in a structure of group dynamics where learners make part of a social learning environment. In this context, technology is a strategic factor in creating both effective lessons and collaborative work settings. The author argued that Web 2.0 tools and devices such as laptops and screens allow the learners and the teachers to connect with each other and to facilitate the flow of information, interaction, and negotiation of meaning. She adds that technology-supported input channels learners to improve both their social and academic skills and obtain new knowledge.

Potential Problems of Collaborative Work

A variety of external factors or elements impact collaborative learning and these could affect the success or failure in the learning process. Saez (2010) described eight categories that can cause the failure of the process: lack of teaching the principles of collaboration, lack of experience and previous knowledge, lack of training teachers and students in collaborative learning, no organized planning or presentation of tasks, lack of commitment and dedication, technological problems, problems of understanding role change, and lack of experiencing social presence in collaborative learning.

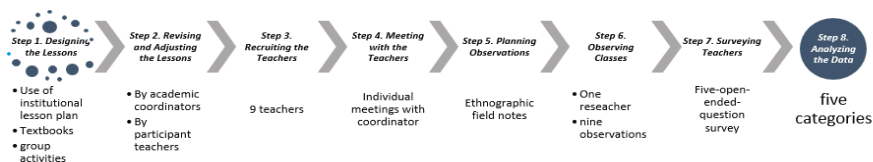
The size of the group can also affect the success of collaboration. For this reason, smaller group size is beneficial to achieve collaboration (Dishon & O’Leary, 1998). The authors claim that students’ age and experience of working in groups, the nature of the learning activity, the time available, and the materials will all influence the size of the group. They also argue that students should work in pairs until they are good at working together. As they gain in experience, the children should experience working in threes (triads) and later in fours and perhaps fives.

Research Design

To address the central objective of this study (validate lesson plans based on activities for collaborative learning environments), we collected and analyzed data following a Case Study methodology. This type of research design was appropriate because it has as main objectives to present the outcomes of a particular context by conducting an in-depth exploration of the case in a specific context and to build awareness of the technical and methodological experiences (Meyers, 2004). Nine teachers (two males and seven females) from the English program for children participated in the study.

Knowing the characteristics of the case study methodology and aiming to design lesson plans for collaborative classrooms and explore teachers and students' reactions towards collaborative learning activities, we followed the following process to get the data and analyze it (see figure 4):

Figure 4. Process designing, collecting, and analyzing data



Procedures

Step 1. Designing the Lessons

The lesson plans were designed based on the contents students had previously worked on in their textbooks. The lessons were designed following the institutional lesson plan form which contains seven stages of class development: Warm-up, Engage, Explore, Construct, Practice, Extend, and Wrap-up. These phases are based on the philosophical principles of the cognitivist psychology and social constructivism and they follow the communicative approach to language teaching.

All the activities included in each phase of the lesson plan were meant as a review. Thus, the plan was to be carried out the class following a unit of work. The activities included songs, videos, puzzles, PowerPoint displays and games, worksheets, easy-to-make crafts, online games, and use of realia. The strategies of collaborative work contained in the lessons were: Turn-taking; sharing work; presenting work to classmates; and completing a task together (e.g. building puzzles together).

It is important to note that the lessons seldom consisted solely of group activities since collaborative learning combines well with other modes of learning, such as lecture by the teacher and individual work.

Step 2. Revising and Adjusting the Lessons

Once the teacher researcher designed the lessons, revisions and adjustments were suggested by one of the academic coordinators and by the participant teachers.

Step 3. Recruiting the Teachers

Nine teachers (two males and seven females) from the English program for children participated in the study. Before the class, teachers were sent the lesson plan and were asked to read it. They were also asked to stop by the academic coordinator's office to discuss any doubts or questions they may have had and to collect the required materials for the lesson. All teachers were selected having into account their teaching experience (at least 5 years teaching children), years of being part of the institution (3 or more years) and their background (all of them had a bachelors 'degree in teaching). Teachers were asked to sign a consent form as part of the ethical considerations of the research.

Step 4. Meeting with the Teachers

The program coordinator met with individual teachers to discuss any doubts or questions about the lesson. The teachers were instructed to follow the lesson, as closely as possible.

Step 5. Planning Observations

The researchers discussed the most suitable method to collect information via observations. Decisions were made about carrying out ethnographic field notes because this method could provide meaningful information about the complexity of group behaviors, show interrelationships among group interactions, and provide context for the observed behaviors.

Step 6. Observing Classes

One of the researchers, skilled in note taking, conducted nine observations. The notes contained a narrative of all the events in the lesson, including specific facts, details of what happened during the class, impressions, specific words or phrases, and summaries of teachers and children's conversations.

Step 7. Surveying Teachers

Teachers were asked to complete a five-open-ended-question survey in which we inquired about the effectiveness and difficulties of implementing the lesson plan for the collaborative learning spaces. (see Results section)

Step 8. Analyzing the Data

Data from observations were analyzed qualitatively by identifying, grouping, and categorizing the observations that pointed in similar directions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The resulting categories were: 1) children's reactions to the collaborative room & to the activities; 2) children's reactions to collaborative work; 3) teacher encouragement of collaborative work; 4) teacher's implementation of the lesson plan; and 5) equipment functioning. All the answers given by teachers to the survey were grouped and summarized by number of question and are presented in the Results section below.

Results

We carried out a qualitative analysis of the notes from the observation and the surveys, created categories by grouping the information that pointed at similar directions. Then we now present the results divided in five categories.

Children's Reactions to the Collaborative Rooms & Activities

From the observer's notes, it can be seen that moving to a non-traditional space generated expressions of curiosity, agitation, and, sometimes, misbehavior. Along the nine observations, children had physical responses such as: touching the equipment on the tables; playing on and with the rolling chairs; following instructions lively and

noisily; not listening or following instructions; manipulating the software, closing the window of the link, making it bigger, smaller; watching the videos attentively; playing with the worksheets; threatening each other; or helping the teacher arrange the furniture.

There were also verbal expressions about the rooms:

- No me gusta el salón [I don't like this classroom]³
- ¿Por qué tantos televisores? [Why are there so many TV sets?]
- Estas sillas son más cómodas que las del salón [These chairs are more comfortable than the ones in our classroom]

Regarding reactions to the activities, there were overall acceptance, engagement, and enjoyment as demonstrated by children's active listening and participation, eagerly dancing or jumping around when prompted by the teacher, or taking notes about the instructions the teacher gave, or showing enchantment and surprise (some children said "wow" and covered their mouths as an indication of wonder when the teacher played a video they really liked), or asking the teacher to repeat the activity, or checking for understanding of the instructions, or looking at the teacher's demonstrations attentively and following instructions.

- Some of the positive comments provided by children about the activities were:
¡Estamos más pilosos con este juego que que! [We're doing so well with this game!]
- Yo quiero hacerlo otra vez [I want to do this activity again]
- ¡Qué lindo! [How beautiful!]

There were also some negative comments about the activities such as:

- Esto si es difícil [This is so hard]
- ¿Cuándo vamos a ver tareas en los libros? [When are we going to work with the textbook?]

³ Comments translated to English by the authors.

Children's Reactions to Collaborative Work

Within this category, we included the strategies: Turn taking, sharing work and opinions, presenting work to classmates, and completing a task together.

Turn-taking

Children seemed to understand the concept of turn taking as evidenced by children standing and letting other classmates use the computer or by effectively taking turns when completing exercises, answering questions, or helping each other

Sharing Work and Opinions

Some of the behaviors for this strategy as described in the field notes were:

- Sharing pictures distributed by the teacher
- Sharing finished work with their teachers or classmates
- Sharing material and helping each other
- Giving recommendations to each other (“Esas muñequitas son para aprender” / “those dolls are for learning.”)⁴
- Exchanging materials
- Giving opinions about each other's work
- Sharing opinions on decoration or foods they like:
 - ¿A usted le gustan los frijoles, las zanahorias? [Do you like beans? Carrots?
 - A mí me gusta la leche en polvo. [I like milk powder]
 - A mí me gustan los dulces. [I like candy]

⁴ A child's response to another child who criticized the dolls.

Presenting Work to Classmates

One of the activities suggested that children presented their work to a host class. The reactions coded by the observer when the children returned to their own classroom and the teacher asked them how they felt were:

¡Bien!	[Good!]
¡Bien, gracias a Dios!	[Good, thanks God!]
Very good!	[Very good]
Yo creí que eran grandes y son chiquitos.	[I thought those students were older, but they are younger]
Me sentía más feliz.	[I was so happy]
Me sentí happy.	[I was happy]
Nerviosa.	[nervous]
Happy!	[Happy]
Casi que me pongo a llorar.	[I was about to cry.]

Completing a Task Together

The notes show that even though, at the beginning of the classes, children had difficulties working together because, they ended up helping each other, participating enthusiastically, and enjoying the tasks. Common behaviors observed from children were: offering help to another student, putting pieces together to complete a puzzle, celebrating when they found a match, and checking boxes in a worksheet together.

Teacher Encouragement of Collaborative Work

The following are specific actions done by the teachers to prepare children for collaborative work:

- Announce to the class they will have some special activities
- Use L1 to emphasize the need to share material
- Number children so that they can take turns coming to the board
- Encourage children to reach consensus on a decision to be made

- Encourage children to play the game in their laptops, taking turns
- Model how to do a presentation
- Invite students to deliver presentations and encourage others to listen
- Directly assign small group work
- Visit individual tables to repeat instructions
- Praise student work
- Use rewards to persuade children to do a presentation

Teacher's Implementation of the Lesson Plan

The observations for this category distinguished two different working styles. In some classes, several teachers did not completely follow the lesson plans as designed. For instance, one of the lessons was to be developed in the crafts room and the teacher used the collaborative room. In another class, an activity was to be conducted using a PowerPoint presentation and the teacher did not use it and neither did the materials. In another session, instructions, as indicated in the plan were not followed and the activities proposed for different stages in the lesson plan were omitted.

It was as well noticed that the quality of instructions given was rather poor when teachers made use of translation in order to convey meaning. An indication of this was children looking confused, asking in L1 for confirmation or starting to work on a task different from the one given by the teacher.

On the other hand, some teachers did follow the lesson plan as designed. One teacher had the printed lesson plan and constantly looked at it to see what was next. Another teacher followed the exercises as described in the lesson plan. Further, another teacher, referred to her smart phone to check the order and description of tasks.

Equipment functioning

The observations revealed a host of difficulties when using the equipment in the rooms. For instance:

- The cd unit did not work properly
- The computer did not have a CD unit
- The PowerPoint was not ready in the laptops or did not have sound

- Online mirror link did not work properly
- Having equipment ready took longer than expected
- Some children had trouble using the touchpad
- Computer equipment and sound were not working
- Television does not have surround sound.
- laptops without mice (hard for children).
- T also says that chairs do not fit children's conditions. (Furniture)

Teachers Opinions about the Lesson Plans for Collaborative Classrooms

In this section, we present the answers given by teachers to the open-ended survey.

Q1 What did you like about this lesson plan?

Some teachers considered that the lesson plans (LP) included songs that fostered student participation, interest, and enjoyment. In addition, the majority of teachers valued the use of videos, mostly because they were short, entertaining, and directly related to the topics. "The connection between topics, activities and the content of videos, helps students memorize and learn more easily," as expressed by one of the teachers. Moreover, the teachers commented that the videos allow children to be more exposed to and interact with the language.

Q2 What difficulties did you encounter teaching this lesson?

The majority of difficulties encountered by some of the teachers when implementing the lessons was the use of computers. More specifically, they mentioned having technical problems with the Internet connection which failed in many occasions.

Another difficulty, as expressed by one teacher, was that the time suggested in the LP format was not enough because it took him longer to complete the activities. In relation to time, other teachers commented that they needed more time to run all the logistics involved in the preparation of the lesson (video, slides, materials, etc.). For other teachers, difficulties arose due to the lack of material (yarn, plates). Two teachers reported having some trouble with the classrooms themselves. Children were distracted because of "the special classroom." One of the teachers said that since the routine changed students kept asking when they were going to use the textbooks.

Q3 What would you change in this LP?

Teachers responded:

- The amount of participants. The collaborative room should only be for small groups maximum 12 students.
- Use less childish material
- Include more content, sometimes the lesson is repetitive; it's review.
- Omit the presentation or visit children do to another classroom (it's intimidating)
- Assign more time per activity.
- Add a computer for each student.

Q4 Do you think the activities proposed foster collaborative work among children?

Teachers in general think the lessons fostered collaboration. First, the activities were suitable for students working well together. Second, the activities promoted student discussion and decision-making. Third, students had the opportunity to share their knowledge and compare ideas. However, one teacher believes that the students are not mature enough to work collaboratively and another teacher said that the lesson did not encourage collaboration, because in order to foster collaboration children needed to “work on something to present as a group”

Some of the specific responses provided by teachers were:

- *Yes, definitely. For instance, when they were marking the boxes according to the information given in the video, they discussed with each other what would the right answers be; and in the «parade» - as the animals were repeated - children would instinctively pair up with those that had the same animals that they did.*
- *Yes, specially the one related with arts and crafts because they get to share and compare their knowledge and material with their classmates.*
- *Talking about a subject in common helped them to do the activity in an efficient way with each other.*
- *No, because they are not mature enough to understand how to work in groups.*

Q5 What do you think about the materials? Are they appropriate to the population age and the lesson needs?

Some of the responses were:

- Yes, but they need to be available
- Yes, the material works and promotes enthusiasm. The material is fun.
- Children were excited to choose the animal they liked
- Yes, the material was perfect
- Some material is childish.

Discussion

In general, children showed the ability to work in collaboration with each other and interact among themselves. Being exposed to a non-conventional room generated, mostly, positive expressions and behaviors in children. Students displayed curiosity, enthusiasm, and engagement. Even though some of the children exhibited unfavorable attitudes towards the operation of the equipment and some furniture, they were, by no means, resistant to the materials and to the new technological spaces. These technology-rich learning spaces helped teachers in the development and improvement of quality learning (Han, Leong, & Nair, 2014).

Undoubtedly, teachers must confront challenges while working on collaborative activities such as monitoring students' behavior. In our study, we observed some instances of misbehavior, such as intensively touching the equipment on the tables; playing on and with the rolling chairs; not listening or following instructions; manipulating the software out of time; playing with the materials; threatening each other. Those behaviors may be due to the excitement of being in a new space and the curiosity it generates. It becomes a key point, then, to look for strategies that introduce children to the collaborative room itself. As an example, teachers could walk children to the collaborative classroom on a short, guided tour while explaining what it is, the benefits it could convey for their learning process, and the guidelines for working in this space. Determining the group norms needs to be part of the organization of collaborative activities (Janssen & Wubbels, 2018). Teachers could also explore the possibility of using multimedia tools as video and images which may well become a means of understanding the aim of moving into a different physical space.

There was a positive reply to complete the activities proposed in the LP when children had a sense of assimilation of the steps they had to follow through. Activities were relevant once the teacher encouraged the class, monitored group work, and repeated instructions when children showed little understanding. Teachers' modeling, for instance, supported by body gestures and contact with the materials needed for each activity, offered children a sequence of connected visuals. In other words, the teacher,

as described by Collazos, Guerrero, and Vergara (2001), was mirrored along most of the class encounters. Consequently, children were able to take turns effectively, share materials and opinions, present work before classmates, and complete tasks together. In fact, children enjoyed working together toward a same goal, such as completing a puzzle together or helping each other.

On the other hand, activities were unsatisfactory when the instructions were not understood by the children and they followed a different course of action; group work was not fostered having children worked individually, and materials were not completely prepared to be used in each exercise. Herein, the teacher as a cognitive mediator (Collazos, Guerrero, & Vergara, 2001) fell short in his/her responsibility for asking questions that sought to verify learners' understanding.

Some specific actions were brought by teachers in relation to the encouragement of collaborative work so that children could better internalize the value of working well with others. Some teachers, for instance, built in opportunities for discussion and consensus. They encouraged children to reach agreement on a decision to be made while collaborating. Other teachers praised student work. That little push to collaborate with others was an incentive that helped children become comfortable working with others or in front of others. Some other teachers promoted collaboration by encouraging kids to take turns so they could attain a common goal in their team. Teachers ensured that children were able to share an intellectual space by learning, doing, and experiencing more together than they would alone. With the aim of encouraging collaborative work, another group of teachers demonstrated how to complete a collaborative task before the class, and they attempted to make children involved in collaborative work by reexamining comprehension of activity instructions in each group work.

In relation to the implementation of the lesson plans, some teachers disregarded the instructions given. It is possible that those teachers decided to rely on their own pedagogical and instructional choices to make up for a particular circumstance that arose unexpectedly. It could also be necessary to direct further examination on the process of writing the LP in order to discover underlying obstacles. However, the majority of teachers applied the lessons as they were designed using reminders such as cards or the cellphone. Based on these findings, it is important to consider better teacher guidance through in-service programs where teachers can clearly understand the concept of collaboration among children and the strategies that they can use. Simply following a lesson plan, even if as closely as possible is not sufficient.

As Hafner & Miller (2011) and Domalewska (2014) suggested, technology has proved to be a strategic factor in creating both effective lessons and collaborative work contexts. These improvements involve the use of videos, platforms, and the Internet, not only to stimulate and persuade students, but also to provide learners with up-to-date and authentic material. In this study, teachers found convenient the use of Web

2.0 tools and devices such as laptops and T.V. screens. Indeed, teachers suggested that technology-supported input like videos and songs helped children to participate, be interested, and enjoy themselves. In addition, teachers considered that the videos and songs presented in most of the lessons were precise, concise, and targeted the subject matter. Also, some teachers assured that videos allowed participants to be in contact and, therefore, exposed to real language. However, teachers reported and observations showed several needs that are to be contended in relation to the aforementioned tools and devices. It becomes necessary to verify the correct functioning of equipment like laptops, screens, internet access, and speed since many of these failed when teaching the lessons. Equipment failures may have negatively impacted the proper implementation of the lessons. It is required to examine and reduce these unfavorable circumstances in order to foster the progress of technology-oriented learning spaces.

Teachers' replies to the open-ended survey report a clear-cut benefit in relation to the use of songs and videos in the LP. Teachers valued the fact that these multimedia resources were concise and entertaining, related to the topics, and let children interact with the language. They also furthered children's involvement, attention, and enjoyment. As Han, Leong, and Nair (2014) affirmed, interactive classroom technologies serve as a vehicle to involve students and to upgrade the quality of learning.

On the other hand, teachers experienced several complications when teaching the lessons. Firstly, the estimated times were not sufficient to complete several tasks in the LP and to prepare the logistics behind the lesson. Furthermore, some teachers found no available material in the resource center of the institution. In addition, several teachers commented that children had certain degree of anxiety when visiting the collaborative classroom and when not using the textbook along the class session. Herein, the class routine had been modified without announcing such fact in advanced. Saez (2010) suggested that external factors like no organized planning or presentation of tasks can have an impact on collaborative learning and may possibly influence the learning process. It is, then, crucial to explain children that not following the textbook becomes an opportunity to connect themselves to the everyday use of language, and teaching a lesson in a space different from the traditional room facilitates interaction with each other.

With respect to modifying stages in the LP, teachers said that the collaborative rooms should only be for small groups, having a maximum of twelve (12) students. The amount of participants can influence the accomplishment of collaboration, which is why a smaller group size can be beneficial to achieve cooperation among children (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998). Another factor that teachers considered for adjustment is the amount of time projected for each activity. It is thus necessary to provide more time for the development of different tasks. Teachers also pointed out the fact of including more content in the lessons and omitting children's visiting neighbor classrooms to display work. It was shown, however, that children had a pleasing time taking part in

the activities offered in the LP and they were able to soften the impact of sharing with people different from the ones they always meet in their rooms.

In addition to the use of Web 2.0 tools, videos, songs, and devices as laptops and T.V. screens, traditional resources like worksheets, photocopies, flashcards, magazine pictures, little boxes, colored sheets of paper, and a variety of classroom supplies were included in the LP. This kind of resources allowed children to engage in kinesthetic activities, to experience with trial and error, and, most importantly, to interact and discuss with their classmates while working in order to solve doubts and come to an agreement. Most teachers in the present study believed that the materials promoted enthusiasm, enhanced collaboration, and were appropriate to the population age and the lesson needs. Nonetheless, they complaint about the availability of some of the material in the resource center of the institution. Thus, the stock of supplies needs to be verified so that the lessons can be carried out as indicated.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, we can conclude that children can effectively work in collaboration and that they enjoyed working towards a similar goal. It is obviously necessary to teach children how to collaborate with each other to avoid misbehaviors; they need to understand the rules and patterns of collaboration in order to effectively work together. Therefore, as part of lesson planning, it would be important to include a session where children are explained, in simple words, the principles of collaboration and how this non-traditional way of learning is beneficial to them. Teachers, as well, need to participate in educational courses where they learn about the theory and practices of collaborative learning in second language teaching.

In general, teachers think that the lessons fostered collaboration given the fact that the activities were suitable for students working well together and promoted student discussion and decision-making. As pointed out by different authors, collaborative learning oriented to younger students can encourage intellectual progress (Azmitia, 2000; Clark et al., 2003; Howe & Tolmie, 1998). It also helps children to develop their knowledge, language, social skills, comprehension of new ideas, and planning to achieve a common goal or to solve a problem (Tunnard & Sharp, 2009).

Considering some difficulties encountered by teachers when applying the lesson plans, it is necessary to adjust the timing proposed for certain activities and to some materials. In addition, computers and desks need to be in optimal conditions to guarantee the well-functioning of the lessons. The capacity of the rooms, as well, is a decisive element to the success of collaborative work. The small collaborative spaces in which this study was conducted are appropriate for no more than 9 children (three children at each table). This number of students allows for more interaction in small groups and collaborating effectively. Finally, the small collaborative room should be available only for children ages 10 and up. The rolling chairs may present a risk for smaller children. All of these aspects are fundamental as they lead to a more engaging learning environment for children.

The present study provided useful information for the use and design of collaborative lesson plans. It is important, however, to consider the lack of generalizability of our results. The sample size was rather small; therefore, caution must be exerted when interpreting the findings. Nonetheless, we provide important information that can be used in a larger scale study.

Pedagogical implications and further research on the importance of planning for collaborative learning are needed. Future researchers should focus on the impact this planning may have on the different students' age range, how it could be implemented in different socio-economic contexts and include other stakeholders of the institutions. New studies should include the students' voices and even be the basis for the creation of teachers' training programs.

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Compliance. The Editor strives to comply with the editorial policies of the Journal, and the publication of each online and print issue according to its established publication schedule.

In the same fashion, to:

- Consult the opinion of the members of the Editorial Board and Committee.
- Generate initiatives of support and constantly improve editorial practices.
- Support initiatives to educate researchers on issues of publication ethics and other ethical aspects of the journal.
- Take responsibility for the process of all articles submitted to the Journal, and develop mechanisms of confidentiality and peer evaluation up to the point of publication or rejection by the journal.

Other principles to follow include:

Peer Review Process and Editorial Decisions. The decision to publish or not shall be established via the process of peer evaluation, according to the “double blind” method in order to guarantee that the evaluation process that is free of conflict of interest between the parties. This rigorous procedure allows peer reviewers to value the technical quality, originality, and scientific contribution of the articles, among other aspects, and at the same time provides authors with the means to improve the article. For this revision process, a sufficient number of peer reviewers will be provided, selected from qualified area experts, with the intention of allowing for a more critical, expert, and objective editorial decision-making process.

Editing and Publication Schedule. The Editor provides for the fulfillment of the editing and publication schedule of articles accepted for publication. Upon the publication of each issue, the Editor and the editorial team accept responsibility for the promotion and distribution of the journal to its readers, subscribers, authors, peer reviewers, and other organizations with whom the institution holds agreements, as well as the data bases and national and international indexing services.

General Editor Obligations and Responsibilities

Authors must present their articles in the link indicated on the OJS-web page, according to the guidelines for the presentation of articles established by the journal. Authors are responsible for the ideas expressed in the articles, and for the ethical appropriateness.

Originality, plagiarism and exclusivity. Authors must explicitly state that the article is original in its creation, and that every effort has been taken to respect the intellectual property of those third parties cited within. Articles must not be reprints, nor published in other journals. Further, authors must declare that the findings are original in nature, that no plagiarism exists, nor distortion or manipulation of the facts.

Exclusivity. Articles submitted to the journal must not be simultaneously submitted to other publications.

Citations and references. Authors must ensure that they have received express permission for the use of material they do not own, including the reproduction of charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, photographs, etc. All sources must be cited appropriately, with complete references provided.

Authorship. Articles with more than one author should order authors' names in hierarchical fashion, indicating by this the degree of function, responsibility, and contribution to the article. By the same token, mention must be made to any individuals who have made significant scientific or intellectual contributions to the research, composition, and editing of the article.

Responsibility. All authors submitting articles must assume full responsibility for their work, and ensure that it presents an exhaustive review and discussion of the most recent and relevant literature.

Research ethics. Research studies must use methodology that ensures that subjects are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to those principles of the code of conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA), GIST highlights the following: discussion of the limitations of confidentiality and the safekeeping of the same, minimization of the intrusion and invasiveness in individuals' privacy, conservation of data and informed consent to research, record, or film. Further, the names of institutions or individuals should be avoided, even if the author has gained permission for their use. If their mention is considered necessary, the author must submit signed authorization for their inclusion. The names of the researchers and participants shall likewise be omitted from the article. It is suggested that authors use pseudonyms, for example in case studies.

Conflict of interest. The Editor shall not consider articles that possibly represent a real or potential conflict of interest, resulting from financial or other relationships of competition or collaboration between authors, companies, or institutions mentioned in the article.

Errors in articles published. Any error or imprecision shall be communicated by the editorial team, and the necessary corrections in the online version of the article made.

Obligations and General Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers:

In the revision process, peer reviewers shall adhere to the following principles:

Confidentiality. Peer reviewers shall not share any information with third parties related to the article or its publication process. In such case that an external opinion may be necessary, reviewers shall seek express written authorization from the Editor in Chief, explaining the reasons. By the same token, reviewers shall not use the content of non-published articles for their own benefit or that of others, except with the express authorization of the authors. The violation of the principle of confidentiality constitutes bad practice by the reviewers.

Contribution to quality. Individuals who commit to evaluating articles submitted to the Journal shall carry out a critical revision, without bias, using clear, non-offensive language, with the intention of guaranteeing scientific and literary quality, according to the area of expertise.

Time management. Although the Journal has a maximum time allotted for the revision process, articles should be evaluated as soon as possible in the hopes of optimizing the revision and editing process. At the same time, peer reviewers who feel that they are unable to fulfill their function as evaluators, either because of lack of expertise, time or possible conflict of interest, shall communicate this immediately to the Editor or editorial team through regular channels.

Detection of errors and bad editorial practices. Reviewers shall pay particular attention to gaps in references to literature or authors that they feel need to be included. At the same time, if in the process of revision, it is possible to detect bad practices on the part of authors, peer reviewers are under the obligation to inform the Editor so that he or she may proceed in accordance with the ethical principles of the journal.

Additional Information

Compensation. The author will receive three copies of the edition in which his/her article shall appear.

Concerns. Communicate with the Editor through e-mail or by telephone, please. Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, International: (57-1) 281-1777 ext. 1296; In Colombia: (05-1) 281-1777 ext.1296

Waiver. Every article shall be subject to the review of the Editorial Committee. The Editor reserves the right to make formal modifications to articles through the editing process.

Editorial Norms. The contents of the articles are the exclusive responsibility of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GiST or ÚNICA. Any article published in GiST may be quoted as long as the source is clearly referenced.

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