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Editorial

Carlo Granados-Beltrán*
Editor-in-chief

It is a pleasure for our editorial committee to share with you this new edition of GiST Journal. In this opportunity, our contributions are framed within the sociocultural turn in human sciences (Johnson, 2006, 2009), in which it is understood that language learning and teaching does not happen in a vacuum as it is constructed dialogically by different actors with their shifting identities and within particular contextual features. Understanding that learning to teach is a sociocultural practice is a premise that leads three of the contributions to this issue; first, **Torres-Cepeda and Ramos-Holguín** describe the process of identity construction as language teachers and learners for a group of pre-service teachers in Tunja by means of a narrative design; second, and in the same line of interest, **Vez-López and Jiménez-Velásquez** explored undergraduate students' perceptions about the skills they have developed when in their last semester of their university studies;

Turning to the practical applications of the sociocultural approach, we find the notion of community supporting pedagogical practices. In this sense, **Bonilla-Salazar** shares with us a case study about elements of youth identity emerging from the participants' interaction with music in English during interventions guided by critical and community-based pedagogies. Also, **Gómez and Cortés-Jaramillo** describe the results of an action research aiming at the construction of negotiated curriculum by using community-based pedagogies to benefit a rural school. Different models focusing on the development of bilingualism also take into consideration the contextual factors which could influence on their success and effectiveness; in this regard, **Rodríguez-Tamayo and Tenjo-Díaz** explored the construction of children's identities during their experience in a dual language program in the United States. Likewise, **Torres-Rincón and Cuesta-Medina** analyzed how Content and Language Integrated Learning could foster the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication and how professional development in this methodology could help teachers to see it as a dialogic approach. Subjectivities also constitute a key component of a sociocultural approach to language teaching and learning, then, **Posada-Ortíz and Garzón-Duarte** by means of autobiographies recovered pre-service teachers' experiences, feelings, and insights as English language learners and **Sevilla-Morales and Gamboa-Mena** examine how pre-service teachers' theoretical reflections on critical incidents connect to the English teaching system in Costa Rica.

In the sociocultural turn, it is understood that knowledge is socially construct and for that construction to happen, we need to communicate with one another; in the field of research, this is done through writing, that is why we have a case study by **Giraldo-Aristizábal** about the challenges and gains scholars face when engaged in the activity of writing academically. Additionally, and regarding, knowledge construction, Cárdenas, González and Álvarez in 2010 stated that teachers' knowledge base is an aspect of teacher education that has not been frequently explored. **Daniel and Burgin** decided to work in this direction by exploring Guatemalan teachers and learners' funds of knowledge about their cultural capital and a similar interest is displayed by **Castañeda-Londoño**, who reviews the concept of teachers' knowledge base from a poststructuralist and decolonial perspective.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we invite you to continue sending your contributions to build a learning and research community for the field of language pedagogy to encourage others to publish valuable work for fellow teachers and researchers.

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Becoming language teachers: Exploring student-teachers' identities construction through narratives[1]

Volviéndose profesores de idiomas: exploración de la construcción de identidades de docentes en formación a través de narrativas

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Abstract

This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative narrative study. Its aim was to analyze what student-teachers' narratives unveiled about the construction of their identity as language learners, and the connections made with being future in-service teachers. This study, which was carried out with undergraduate students from a public university in Tunja, was the product of permanent interaction and dialogue with student-teachers in their initial teaching experiences. Narratives, in-depth interviews, and journals were used as data collection instruments. Data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach. The results suggest that student-teachers construct and re-construct their identities as language learners and future teachers across classroom interactions and their empowerment through teaching and reflection.

*Key words***:** Identity; language learners' identities; teacher identity; classroom interaction; second language acquisition.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta un informe de un estudio cualitativo-narrativo que tuvo como objetivo analizar qué develaban las narrativas de docentes en formación en relación con la construcción de su identidad como estudiantes de idiomas y su conexión como futuros profesores de inglés. Este estudio, que se llevó a cabo con estudiantes de pregrado de una universidad pública en Tunja, fue el producto de un proceso de interacción y diálogo permanente con docentes en formación sobre sus experiencias

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iniciales de enseñanza. Se utilizaron narrativas, entrevistas en profundidad y diarios de campo como instrumentos de recolección de datos. Los datos se analizaron utilizando el enfoque de la teoría fundamentada. Los resultados sugieren que los maestros en formación construyen y reconstruyen sus identidades como estudiantes de idiomas y futuros docentes con base en las interacciones en el aula y su empoderamiento a través de la enseñanza y reflexión.

Palabras clave: Identidad; identidades de los estudiantes de idiomas; identidad del maestro; interacción en el aula; adquisición de un segundo idioma.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta um relatório de um estudo qualitativo-narrativo que teve como objetivo analisar o que revelavam as narrativas de docentes em formação, em relação com a construção da sua identidade como estudantes de idiomas e a sua conexão como futuros professores de inglês. Este estudo, que se realizou com estudantes de graduação de uma universidade pública em Tunja, foi o produto de um processo de interação e diálogo permanente com docentes em formação sobre suas experiências iniciais de ensino. Foram utilizadas narrativas, entrevistas em profundidade e diários de campo como instrumentos de coleta de dados. Os dados se analisaram utilizando o enfoque da teoria fundamentada. Os resultados sugerem que os mestres em formação constroem e reconstroem as suas identidades como estudantes de idiomas e futuros docentes com base nas interações na sala de aula e a sua apropriação através do ensino e reflexão.

Palavras chave: Identidade; identidades dos estudantes de idiomas; identidade do mestre; interação na sala de aula; aquisição de um segundo idioma

Introduction

In the field of education and research, there has been an increase in interest related to teacher identity. Being involved in educative practices requires that the academic community understands a myriad of factors underpinning teaching and learning practices. When stakeholders, administrative staff, teachers and students are aware of who they are, what they need, and the factors influencing their teaching and learning processes on a daily basis, they are capable of making more informed decisions and implementing changes in the curriculum. Teacher identity has been of great concern to teacher education (Bullough, 1997) because it discovers the principles needed to better understand the nature of teaching and learning.

Identity has taken on various definitions in literature, but there is a common perspective that is shared by some authors. Identity implies an ongoing, dynamic, complex, subjective, multifaceted, and contradictory process (Beijaard, Paulien, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Flores & Day, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) in the construction and (re)construction of one's core selves based on experiences, values, beliefs, and imagined representations in society. According to the subject's position in distinct contexts, a sense of self or selves emerges to attribute meaning to a person's lived experiences and emotions.

Most research studies on teacher identity have been conducted with in-service teachers, while few others have been carried out with student-teachers in Second Language Acquisition (SLA henceforth) environments. In the latter context, language student-teachers are enrolled not only in a process of acquiring the language *per se,* but also learning how to teach it. Student-teachers also experience a large number of fluctuating issues as learners and as beginner-teachers. Some of these fluctuating aspects are related to the transitional change between being a student and becoming a teacher.

This transitional change is worth exploring and understanding in order to inform and encourage teacher education programs to foster contextualized teaching practices. This is because the transition from student to teacher is a dynamic, day-to-day process that implies changes, adaptations, and sometimes, dramatic experiences. These experiences make part of the construction and reconstruction of their selves as learners and future language teachers as well. Since "learning to become an effective teacher is a long and complex process" (Flores & Day, 2006, p.219), student-teachers' experiences can provide a descriptive understanding on these processes, which can help in making informed decisions in teacher education programs.

Therefore, teacher educators are emphatically required to open spaces for student-teachers to reflect and express about the essence of their education

and future. Several factors are involved in the construction of positions, perceptions, and understandings of what it means to become a language teacher in today's society.

This narrative study reports the insights of thirteen student-teachers in a process of identity construction as language learners and their connections with becoming future English as a Foreign Language (EFL henceforth) teachers. The student-teachers are English language learners from a public university in Colombia and who are on the path of becoming future English language teachers. In their daily academic endeavors, student-teachers face a myriad of challenges. They have difficulties with the linguistic and research components presented in their first semesters. Once they advance in the teacher education program, student-teachers might struggle with the pedagogical component as well.

When student-teachers are in their eighth semester, they start their English teaching experiences at schools. This means that student-teachers go through the transition of being students to being teachers. A change like this can invoke a combination of emotions in student-teachers, as it entails extra responsibilities and workload. Thus, they experience physical and psychological adaptations. During this transitional process, we were able to converse with the student-teachers. We identified that student-teachers do not make their own decisions while planning their English classes, but rather they request support from the teacher educator and homeroom teacher at school.

In this vein, teacher educators partake in the decision-making process of student-teachers. This implies a significant responsibility not only with the teacher education program, but also with the community. In such a way, teacher educators and student-teachers are invited to embark together on the path of learning to teach collaboratively as a common goal to be met. Thus, reflection and dialogue play a crucial role in hearing student-teachers' voices in order to analyze and make changes in the design of teacher preparation programs. By doing so, student-teachers' needs are met as language learners and future EFL teachers.

Having spaces for reflection, career guidance, and counselling are factors involved in the construction of identity learning (Geijel & Meijers, 2005). We believe that if student-teachers receive support in their vocational decision, they might assure their professional conviction and commitment as language learners and future teachers. Given that in SLA environments, discourse, interaction, and dialogue play a meaningful role, teacher educators might influence the ways student-teachers construct their identity as learners.

Such an influence in identity construction is mediated by discourses constructed amid the interactions carried out in the SLA educational environment. Discourses are written or oral texts that can be interpreted from

different perspectives. Participants make meaning from these interpretations which are constantly changing to contribute in identity construction. As discourses are sources to meaning-making and rich in subject knowledge, speakers might have the power to position the audience within different domains: learner, writer, participant, among others. This position influences the construction of identity of individuals. In the classroom, the speaker is the teacher who might position learners within discourse practices. Language, identity and power are interconnected terms that have influences in shaping one's identity. Thus, discourse is a powerful tool to help student-teachers construct their identity as language learners. A discourse can change ways of thinking, elicit new perspectives of perceiving oneself as an individual, learner, member of a society, among others.

In this vein, as language learners are immersed in an interactional environment mediated by discourses, these have influence not only over student-teachers' meaning- making process, but also over positions they assume as language learners and future teachers. Then, discourses permeate the day-to-day academic endeavor of teacher educators and language learners in the learning and teaching processes. As identity is constructed and re-constructed by daily lived experiences, we believe that in a language learning environment, discourses are sources of thinking and re-thinking one's identity. Thereby, identity is constructed within diverse discourses or interactions (Norton, 2011). From this, discourses need to emerge from suitable experiences from learners and teacher educators to better understand phenomena in the educational context. This understanding might lead student-teachers to reflect upon who they are as learners and future in-service teachers, what they expect from their teaching practices and their future professional goals to be met.

Suitable experiences are necessary in teacher education programs to approach a situated pedagogy, as sometimes the theoretical foundations offered to student-teachers are seldom related to real contexts, preventing student-teachers from tailoring these theories to practical teaching realizations (Korthagen, 2010). In such a way, student-teachers' experiences as language learners set spaces for reflection upon the necessity of contextualized teaching practices mediated by discourses. Reflective practices provide insights on possible ways how student-teachers eventually ascribe themselves as future in-service teachers: reflective professionals.

Given that identity is constructed amid the dynamics of interweaving different domains such as discourses, interactions, reflection, identification, sense of belonging, and beliefs about knowledge constructed in SLA contexts; identity construction relates to two main terms: personal epistemology and communities of practice. On the one hand, personal epistemology refers to the clustered beliefs and ways of thinking of student-teachers towards knowledge and knowing (Hofer, 2001). Personal epistemology encompasses

elements such as "beliefs about the definition of knowledge, how knowledge is constructed, how knowledge is evaluated, where knowledge resides, and how knowing occurs" (Hofer, 2001, p. 355). The previous elements constitute some dimensions in identity construction of student-teachers as they retake their past lived experiences as learners, they share their beliefs about knowledge and knowing in SLA contexts, they evaluate their learning process in order to set prospects about themselves as future in-service teachers

On the other hand, communities of practice emerge as a result of members' interaction. A community of practice can be defined as the group of individuals who not only belong a community, but who share common interests, concerns and desires aiming to interact and learn from each other (Wenger, 1998). The members of a community of practice construct altogether a social identity, which is framed by the common dimensions developed in such a community. In this study, student-teachers construct their language identity as they engage in a learning environment. They share the conviction and interest of becoming future in-service teachers, so they learn from each other in every interaction carried out in the SLA environments. In such a community, student teachers have a sense of belonging, they feel identified with, and their voices are heard. Thereby, discourses mediate the mutual learning occurring in the community of practice, which could unveil insights on "how collective discourses shape personal worlds and how individual voices combine into the voice of a community" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p.15).

Literature Review

Identity in second language acquisition

Identity is defined as one's core self (or senses of self). It is usually referred to as one's identification with a particular social group, the emotional ties connected with that group, and the meaning one gives to that connection. A widely accepted view of identity is the one posited by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) that defines identity as "a dynamic and shifting nexus of multiple subject positions, or identity options, such as mother, accountant, heterosexual, or Latina" (p. 35). On the other hand, Norton (2000), well-known for her theories on identity and language learning, conceives identity as:

> …how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future. I argue that SLA theory needs to develop a conception of identity that is understood with reference to larger, and more frequently inequitable, social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction. (p. 5)

In her more recent work, Norton (2011) posits that identity, or subjectivity, as it is called under the poststructuralist framework, "is defined as multiple, contradictory, and dynamic, changing across historical time and social space" (p. 172). In other words, there is no "real me". Thus, the subject position is "constructed within diverse discourses or sites of practice" (p. 172).

The methodology used to investigate identity and agency has been based on four methods: *case study methods, narrative inquiry, ethnographic research* and *conversation analysis* or *discourse analysis*; and, of course, any combination of these methods. Actually, it would be fair to say that a combination of narratives from the participants (conversation, discourse, narratives, etc.), mixed with direct observation, would constitute an encompassing enough method to ascertain results that reflect both self-image and understanding of the participants' own learning processes.

In the first studies done on identity in the field of SLA, the items related to identity were considered static, clear-cut variables to which individuals ascribed or were ascribed to in a non-problematic manner. These variables were age, gender, social class, ethnicity, language variety and place of birth. There were a number of studies that analyzed both how different identity groups were constructed by others and how their linguistic varieties were actually different (Duff, 2012). "Identity was operationalized as the degree or strength of ethnic or linguistics identification with one's own (L1) group in relation to other groups" (Duff, 2012, p.3). The main objectives of these studies (Gumperz, 1982) were to identify how identity, especially linguistic identity, affected the way people learned and performed in L2 and how to optimize their performance in very specific interactions, like job interviews.

When people are bilingual or immersed in contexts where more than two languages are spoken, they tend to affiliate themselves with one language. This affiliation was not static, rather it was dynamic. This also the true for identity, and in this case, linguistic identity. Zentella (1997) argued that linguistic identity "is not a given, an automatic membership granted by birthplace, parentage or an accumulation of linguistic features, cultural artifacts or group customs with meanings that can be definitely interpreted" (p.3). Therefore, individuals are constantly constructing their linguistic identity similar to the construction of social identities.

In more recent studies (Norton, 2010; Duff, 2012), a more dynamic perspective on identity and identity related variables is being used. A concept that has been proposed is that of "possible selves", instead of one static notion of "self". Genung's (2002) account of her own experience as a Chinese language learner proves that students start a course with expectations and different levels of expertise in the language they are trying to learn. However, the specific

interactions that take place in the classroom restructure these expectations, redirect objectives, and provide informed results of the courses.

Defining someone by means of one identity feature, such as ethnic or social background, does not allow the possibility to see someone's abilities, roles and acts of agency that might be personal and that would construct a more dynamic image of a "self". Learners can actually choose to play a role that identifies them and gives them a place in the classroom. Those roles might be *class clown, nerd, party animal*, and many others. Additionally, their academic results will most likely reflect those expected for players of these roles.

Theory of identity and classroom activities' development

Literature suggests that a text does not have a single meaning as it is a product of a given time and context (Locke, 2004). Therefore, several meanings may arise from reading the text, which can change the interpretation of the identities of the participants. It is inevitable and necessary to state that one of the most important consequences of the current theory of identity for classroom development is that, provided the right context to discuss the meanings of a given text, a situation can be created in which the identities of the participants are changed. Thus, the interpreter of the text, usually the teacher, possess the power to position the writer as a learner, rather than a knower, and vice versa. This fact can have huge implications for students, since they might feel empowered when their diverse voices are heard as valid accounts of reality represented in their narratives. Needless to say, this process of empowerment will only enrich the discussion on the topic, as well as improve students' participation and motivation toward the class and learning in general.

Furthermore, the theory of identity or subjectivity follows the poststructuralist term "investment" in identity construction. Norton (2011) suggests that *investment* is different from motivation, since a student can be highly motivated to learn a language, but at the same time, not *invested* in the practices of the classroom. This can occur when she or he perceives the way in which the discourse is distributed or administered plays against her or his possibilities to develop further her or his linguistic skills. For example, if time for speaking is only allotted to people with above average linguistic skills, the student might think that this practice is highly discriminatory and will withdraw from participating in classroom activities, or even from the class altogether.

Since interactions are constructed every day in each class, it is important for teachers to be aware of the processes of identity constructed through interaction. For example, teachers can administer equal speaking time so as to not discriminate students because of their linguistic level, gender, age,

ethnicity, etc. By taking these processes of identity construction into account, motivation, as well as investment, will be enhanced once learners feel their discourses and identities are respected and can be developed equally among everyone else's (Norton, 2011). In fact, teachers may not only ask themselves if students are motivated, but if the classroom language practices address students' hopes and desires about the future.

The concept of identity is not only important for classroom linguistic practices, but it is relevant for administrators and policy makers. They too must consider the fact that the essentially changing nature of teachers' and students' identities impact the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Likewise, if teachers are actively aware of the complex, multi-layered nature of identity, they may improve not only motivation but also investment in their classrooms.

Methodology

The research methodology is deliberately framed within a qualitative paradigm because emphasis was made on gaining deep and humanized understanding of the dynamic and complex process of student-teachers' identity construction in classroom activities (Norton & McKinney, 2010). This study followed some principles of Narrative Inquiry Research, in which storytelling becomes a powerful tool to make sense of the world, to attribute meaning to experiences participants have lived. In other words, "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). In such a way, trying to comprehend the other, the world, and one's reality is the core of this research study to make sense of student-teachers' stories. As Gadamer (2002) states "it is not the word what we can see: it is the universe what we try to comprehend"[3] (p. 68).

Context and participants

This study was carried out with 13 student-teachers from a public university in Tunja (Colombia). They are enrolled in the eighth semester of the Modern Language Program. This program focuses on educating future English language teachers. These student- teachers have just finished developing their linguistic skills, and they recently embarked on their first teaching experiences as part of the requirements for the English Didactics I course.

In the Didactics I course, student-teachers are immersed in three areas: theoretical, pedagogical, and research. The pedagogical component was the

[3] Translated by the authors

main component to be developed in this course. This aspect was displayed through the teaching experiences student-teachers had at the schools. During the process, they planned their classes adopting a given format, and they received feedback from the teacher educator who guided the course and the homeroom teacher at school. After that, they made decisions upon their lessons and continued teaching English at the schools.

Accounting for trustworthiness in this research study, a letter of permission to conduct the research study was submitted to the Curricular Committee of the Modern Language program. A consent letter was also given to student-teachers at the very beginning of the process. As confidentiality is a vital aspect in this research study, the researchers explained that the results of the research study had academic purposes only. Also, student-teachers could request or ask for information about the status of the project when required. Once they accepted to partake in the research study, we invited the student-teachers to assign themselves a pseudonym.

Data collection procedures

Narratives, in-depth interviews and journals were used as the data collection procedures in this research study. Student-teachers wrote narratives, in the English language, during an academic semester. These narratives give an account of past and present experiences they had lived as language learners and initial practitioners at the schools. The writing process of the narratives was mediated by a practice of reflection and positioning of student-teachers towards their experiences as learners and future teachers. Narratives can be defined as a set of consciously told stories which emerge from deeper stories people are not aware of. Hence, every single story, true or fictional, portrays pieces of real experiences and beliefs (Bell, 2002). These narratives also help the researchers understand and unveil hidden information that had not been brought up to the surface yet. In addition, narratives in language teaching and learning focus on unveiling lived and imagined experiences or stories (Barkhuizen, 2014). Although the literature does not specify the types of stories that encompass the idea of narratives, student-teachers were free to write life stories in relation to their past lived experiences as learners.

In-depth interviews helped us gain a deeper, descriptive understanding of the narratives student-teachers had written. In-depth or face-to-face interviews can be defined as a staple means that facilitates negotiating exchanges between two interlocutors, and which are mediated by various contextual elements (Oltmann, 2016). As in-depth interviews elicit an interactional reciprocity, data emerge as the result of individuals' co-constructions carried out in diverse contexts (Hayes, 2005). This data collection procedure allowed us comprehend

the continually construction and re-construction of stories by the participants in their identity construction process.

The in-depth interviews were approximately 30-40 min in length and were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Data gathered from the in-depth interviews showed the student-teachers ability to make sense of their realities, beliefs, and day-to-day experiences in relation to their identity construction process as language learners and its connection as future teachers. The protocol for the in-depth interviews was delivered in Spanish, the student-teachers L1. By doing so, a harmonic and natural environment was set which favored the student-teachers' storytelling.

In the same way, journals were means of promoting reflection and deepening understanding of reality (Bain, Ballantyne, Packer, & Mills, 1999). Journals are not only mechanisms or tools that keep records of past events but are also sources for in-depth reflection. Thus, journal writing "offers the opportunity for analytical thinking and self-analysis about what one's personal stories conveys" (DeVault, 1997 as cited in Barry & O'Callaghan, p. 56). Similarly, it is a way to empower student-teachers as language learners and future EFL teachers (Insuasty & Zambrano, 2010) as a way to unveil their future imagined professional identity. Student-teachers wrote journals on critical lived experiences that were found in their narratives with the aim to reflectively expand on the life stories presented.

After gathering the information, it was organized, analyzed, and theorized as a way to give account for trustworthiness in data management. Therefore, the following lines present the data analysis and findings of this research study, which emerged from the analysis across the three data collection procedures.

Data analysis and findings

We followed a narrative analysis as the research method to profoundly comprehend the human dimension depicted through stories. This research method helps to understand a narrative by means of splitting it into critical fractions which play a meaning-making role in the whole narrative. In language learning and teaching, analyzing narrative data comprises four essential levels: content, form, context and thematic analysis (Pavlenko, 2007).

While analyzing the narratives we delved into significant and critical words the narrators used to tell their stories. We pursued the content of the narratives through a three-step dynamic analysis: structural, thematic, and interactional. Firstly, in the frame of structural analysis, we paid close attention to the emphasis made on those words and the possible meanings emerging from them. This stage relates to the relevance of having spaces for human understanding through words and its connection to the world (Gadamer, 2002).

Secondly, we focused on the content of the story *per se*. A "narrative can illuminate purposes, plans, and goals which are the forms by which our lives have some direction, motivation, and significance for us" (Johnson, 1993, pp. 170-171). At this stage, this thematic analysis portrays what the story is about and its purposes and attributions behind it.

Thirdly, interactional analysis encompasses the dialogical perspective between the teller and listener. In this case, the narratives, the interviews and journals were significant means that gave place to interaction, interpretation, sense and meaning-making between researchers and narrators in order to unveil those invisible voices student-teachers had to tell. Thus, "a life is not how it was but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold (Bruner, 1994, p.36). This procedure provided us with the opportunity to go in-depth through each narrator's stories; aiming to interpret, re-interpret, construct and reconstruct meaning from narratives.

Two main thematic elements/themes emerged in order to respond to the research question, which was the following: What do student-teachers' narratives unveil about their identity construction as language learners?

Constructing student-teacher' identities through classroom interactions

This first theme emphasizes the role student-teachers assumed as language learners and the connection they made with their future professional lives. Student-teachers position themselves in between being a learner and becoming a language teacher. As SLA classrooms are interactional and productive environments by nature, student-teachers highlighted the important role interaction played in their classroom as learners and in their contexts as beginner teachers. In other words, each situation the student-teachers had lived as learners was taken into consideration in order to establish connections with their teaching experiences at the schools. This assertion can be better described in the following excerpt:

> "I do not think just as a learner because I am becoming a teacher and it means to convey knowledge to other people in any context. Becoming a teacher implies many factors such as treating people in the same way, helping others when they ask for help because I am not going to be just a teacher, I am going to be a friend, an advisor, a guide, but especially a model for my students". (Narrative, Alisson) [Sic]

In this excerpt, Alisson makes an explicit statement regarding her role as a student-teacher. She assumes a position of being a different teacher, a person who is on the path of changing the commonplace perspective of what being a teacher might imply. However, when she mentions the fact of conveying knowledge to others, she accounts for a notion of power in knowledge teachers

have. At the same time, she expresses her desires for the future. She makes a special emphasis on becoming a role model for her students. When she highlights wanting to treat students in the same way, it highly relates to the dynamics of interaction in the SLA classroom as a way to avoid discrimination. This can also reshape the expectations, beliefs, and perspectives student-teachers may have (Genung, 2002).

In this vein, student-teachers went through a dynamic process that took place on a day-to-day basis. Little by little, they picked up elements from their teaching experiences as language learners and teachers. The student-teachers' previous experiences as learners served as a source of reflection towards their future as language teachers. This reflection lead student-teachers to think of possibilities on how to deal with troublesome situations. Therefore, having a first-hand contact with the educational environment provided the student-teachers with a meaningful panorama of the circumstances they will face as future in-service teachers. Thus, student-teachers reflected upon the near future, projecting themselves as language teachers.

> "One of my hobbies is reading. I love going through the world books present us. In my free time, I sit down on my couch to read, I have a cup of coffee and get relaxed. I have realized that in books theories and activities about teaching appear to be very positive, everything is very beautiful and there are methodologies with super effective strategies. However, when these theories are addressed in real contexts, you have to take into account not only the methodologies, but also everything happening around every single student". (Interview, Antonela)

Reading between the lines, Antonela acknowledges that there is a dissonance among theories, activities, methodologies and the real-world context. This becomes her greatest concern and worry as a future EFL teacher. She states that it is expected that teachers take into consideration a myriad of factors affecting each individual student and the way it can impact his/her classmates. In relation to this, Anspal, Eisenschmidt, and Löfström (2012) point out that, "Worries and fears are related to ability to cope with real classroom situations. The student-teachers have acquired some pedagogical knowledge and skills, and begin to wonder how these are to be applied in real teaching situations" (p. 206). This explains why Antonela questions the existing gap between the information (theories and activities) provided in books and the way it should be extrapolated in real teaching contexts. The gap between theory and practice appears to be a common component in studies conducted with pre-service teachers.

> "When I was a child, I wanted to study many things, but I did not have any clear idea on what I wanted to study. Today, I have the marvelous opportunity to walk on the path of education to become an English

> teacher. Life has taught me a lot on this long way. In my teaching lesson, I interact with students and they say: why do I want to learn English if in my house I do not have what to eat, I do not have basic supplies. Then, I get shocked with those situations and stop worrying and seeing language learning as the unique goal to meet". (Journal, Paquita)

In her teaching experiences and through her interactions with her students, Paquita finds that her students have a lack of interest in learning English. Her students do not identify with the subject, nor do they see any benefit from having to learn it. They are more concerned with their daily living situations as they relate to the basic human necessities of life (maintenance, housing, among others). This circumstance changes her prior conception of students' reality and motivation towards learning English. This interpretation matches a justification in Cattley's (2007) words, when she affirms that "Their own teaching experiences challenge students' existing thinking – an important element in developing professional identity" (p.254). It is through teaching experiences and interactions in the classroom that student-teachers can analyze and try to understand the context and circumstances their students live in. Thus, meeting students' needs, and personal priorities become more relevant for teachers rather than having their students learn English.

In accordance with the aspects described above, another participant narrates some important insights and situations lived as a student-teacher working at the schools.

> "I have heard this profession is not well-paid, people say this profession is not quite important in having a social-status. Ok, they can have reason in what they think and say, but to me, it is one of the most privileged professions. I learn every day from my students and I live gratifying moments. It is cool to see when the students come by and tell you 'I really liked the class, I loved the material that you brought, it was a very nice class'. These things create an atmosphere of trustworthiness and that is very gratifying, it motivates me to continue on this path". (Narrative, Milu)

By the same token, Milu expresses her gratification and happiness when she receives approval for her lessons from her students. This increases her confidence and motivation to continue striving to do her best in her profession as a future EFL teacher. Thus, it can be suggested that real life teaching experiences contribute to student- teachers' awareness of the conditions of their future working environments, students' needs, challenges, and gratifications when teaching. In this sense, student-teachers experience ambivalence framed under two main dimensions: previous experiences as learners and real teaching experiences.

Given that "language teacher identities are constantly evolving and are developed through pedagogical practice" (Barkhuizen, 2017, p.9), student-teachers' identities as learners and future teachers are constructed daily through the interaction and negotiations that take place in the classroom. At the same time, these identities become part of their self-images as teachers.

Student-teachers' empowerment through teaching and reflection

The second theme encompasses some attributions and meanings to their initial teaching immersions. Student-teachers asserted that their identity as learners underwent a process of change when they started teaching and reflecting upon their own teaching experiences. Previously, they had some beliefs about education and perceptions regarding their teacher educators. While teaching at the schools, they started to re-shape their beliefs, perceptions, desires, and realities. In other words, their identities as learners were being re-constructed, and this created a closer connection to their role as future teachers, as illustrated in the lines below.

> "I have been able to understand that teaching gives you power and with power we change society". (Journal, Socrates)

> "Returning to Nelson Mandela, education is the strongest weapon we can use to change the world. Thus, you end up seeing your students as granites to encourage all these things like critical thinking by taking advantage of all those controversial issues in our society to promote critical thinking in our classrooms. It is with these critical teachers that little by little we change our students' way of thinking: that is the essence of education". (Interview, Alisson)

Explicit emphasis was made on changing minds, ways of thinking, and the idea of what being a teacher entails. This is an appropriate momentum to start thinking about education as a tool to change society, which I applaud because a current change in education is urgent. This concept on education emerged along with a conscious, rigorous, and reflective process. Accordingly, Schön (1983) pointed out the importance of understanding and improving how we teach by reflecting on our own experiences.

Accordingly, Giroux (1988) noted that teachers are "transformative intellectuals when they combine reflections from their pedagogical labor with their role of teachers by fostering those reflections in their students and also when they show them how to be critical in what they do" (p.122). Alisson expresses her optimistic vision towards education and highlights the role teachers have to transform the way of their students' think. She further asserts that the "real" essence in language teaching has to do with problematizing

issues in education by accounting for "controversial aspects in society". In the same way, she metaphorically suggests that teachers need to be active agents in society in charge of generating multiple, meaningful initiatives of change, which could be developed along with their students.

Another emerging and vital aspect, in teaching and education in general, is connected with the contributions of research in these fields.

> "The most important in teaching English as a Foreign Language is innovation and the only way for innovating is through doing research, researching theories and how English teaching methods have worked in other contexts. Also, I like to bear in mind meaningful learning, to set students in a real context, if they are not in a real context learning won't be meaningful and they will forget what they have learned". (Lusiana, Narrative) [Sic]

> "In research, I have found a way to discover and reflect on new realities, to explore new contexts and gain a better understanding of them". (Interview, Mary)

By doing a careful analysis of these excerpts, research appears to be a crucial component in teaching English as a foreign language. By means of doing research, these two student teachers find alternative ways to explore, understand, reflect, and act upon distinct phenomena occurring in their new, immediate teaching contexts. That is to say, they have an optimistic vision towards using research as part of their endeavors. Therefore, research is understood as a strategy to take action after reflecting about a current situation.

This concept of research is strongly opposed to the one described in an investigative study done by Xu (2014). This author reports that teachers have a misconception about research, and they assure that time constraints prevent them from reading and conducting research. In this regard, the author does not agree with the reasons proposed by the teachers. Rather, she affirms that these teachers were not sufficiently aware of the nature of teaching. In the end, the author suggests that teachers should not separate themselves from research, but rather, see it as part of their teaching practices (Xu, 2014). In this case, student-teachers highlighted the relevance research has as a means of promoting spaces for reflection, action, change, and innovation in teaching. With this notion, student-teachers start positioning and empowering themselves as language learners and future teachers.

Conclusions

There were several critical factors influencing the ever-changing dynamics in the construction of student-teachers' identity as language learners and future teachers. Accounting for students' inner insights in their first teaching experiences is a common constituent of great concern for teacher educators. Thus, student-teachers constructed or re-constructed their visions, perspectives, and beliefs on what it means to become a teacher. They suggested that becoming a language teacher goes beyond the subject matter. It entails recognizing the human being as a "persona" in all aspects of the SLA environment: activities, interactions, role play switching, and meaning-making processes. In this respect, student-teachers imagined themselves as language teachers who care about their pupils' learning process and human dimensions. In addition, taking actions based on reflection was an integral part of the student-teachers' path to defining, constructing, and accepting their attached meanings as learners and future EFL teachers.

Student-teachers' prior experiences as language learners with different teachers comprised a dynamic and shifting process in which harmonic and complex momentums were lived. Teachers were significant agents who contributed, in a complete sense of the word, to student-teachers' decision and meaning-making process with regards to the type of teacher they would like to become. In doing so, they went through a dynamic process that took place day-to-day in which they were picking up little by little some components from their teachers. The dimensions or aspects taken from teachers were confirmed, rejected, and/or extrapolated to their own teaching experiences, some others remain as imagined aspects to revive in the future.

Equally important, prior experiences as language learners helped student-teachers either increase or decrease their motivation to become teachers. However, student-teachers understood every teaching-learning session as an opportunity to grow personally and professionally. Besides that, they became more aware of the inequalities, disparities, and challenges in the various educational contexts as a way to envision themselves towards their future working environment. The fact of raising awareness changed future EFL teachers' vision of education and encouraged them to re-think their roles as future teachers. Ideologies and perspectives integrate the definition of "self" when answering the question "Who am I?", which articulate to the multiple "identities".

A post-method perspective of teaching was recognized and acknowledged as crucial in the teaching of English. This explicitly has to deal with the bases of critical pedagogy, through which student-teachers expressed their affiliation within a transformative and emancipatory practice through the teaching of English. Thereby, teaching was drawn beyond structural boundaries of

language where students "come to see the world not as a static reality, but as reality in process, in transformation" (Freire, 1970, p. 71).

Student- teachers construct their identities as future teachers taking into consideration their previous experiences as learners. They affiliate their future professional teacher profile with a previous teacher they admire or identify as a role model teacher. Student-teachers construct, de-construct, and re-construct their projected identities according to the experiences they live day-to day. They make emphasis on becoming teachers who are characterized by their commitment in education to grow personally as well as professionally.

Pedagogical implications and further research

Writing life stories is a time-consuming task for student-teachers, but it is worth doing because they come up with happenings that lead them towards a reflective process on what teaching really entails. This process should take place in earlier semesters to have a more consolidated perspective of teaching and learning at the moment of going to schools for first time. Also, it is important to avoid student-teachers experience a dramatic change from being a learner to being a teacher from one day to another, and without having a clear understanding of the factors involved in real teaching contexts.

Student-teachers, pre-service, and in-service teachers are invited to go through an introspection process, by means of storytelling, to gain a deeper understanding on their roles they have as transformative agents in society. It is necessary to embark on the path making a transformative progress in each individual's life to stop perpetuating ways of colonizing people in education.

Looking into the future, there is a need to delve into research with regards to student-teachers' identity construction since the very first moment they enroll in the initial teacher education program in order to unveil how they feel as language learners, and how the program *per se* permeates their identities as learners and future teachers.

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Students' Perceptions Regarding their B.A. in English Language Graduate[1]

Percepción de estudiantes acerca de su perfil en el programa de licenciatura en inglés

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Abstract

This paper examines the perception undergraduate students have, regarding the attributes they have developed in terms of transferable and communicative skills. The goal was to shed light on how undergraduate students, in the context of this research, perceive their graduate profile. This study was carried out at a university school of foreign languages in southeast Mexico over the course of a year, from August 2016 to July 2017. Thirty male and female students participated in the study. Their ages ranged from 21 to 30 years old. They all were about to complete the last term of the BA program at the time the data were collected. The data collection tools used for this inquiry were interviews and surveys. The interviews were used to get an insight, in general terms, into the participants' perceptions whereas the surveys provided richer information about the students' perceived competences and skills. Content analysis was used to process the data, which were coded classified, summarized. The data suggest that students perceived gains in critical thinking skills, research skills, language skills, autonomy, and motivation as part of the attributes they developed within the program. However, attributes regarding teaching skills, learning strategies, technology skills, teamwork and ability to develop new projects and ideas are perceived as poorly developed or not acquired at all.

Key words: students' perception; English, communicative skills; undergraduate; graduate profile; foreign language; learning strategies

Resumen

Este artículo examina la percepción de estudiantes de licenciatura, previamente a su graduación, con respecto a los atributos que han desarrollado en términos de habilidades transferibles y comunicativas. El objetivo de este estudio fue arrojar luz sobre cómo

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los estudiantes de licenciatura, en el contexto de esta investigación, perciben su perfil de egreso. El estudio se llevó a cabo en una universidad en el sureste de México en el trascurso de un año, de agosto 2016 a julio 2017. Treinta alumnos, entre hombres y mujeres, participaron en él. Sus edades van de los 21 a los 30 años. Todos estaban a punto de concluir el último semestre del programa cuando se recogieron los datos. Las herramientas de colecta de datos fueron encuestas y entrevistas. Las primeras se usaron para conocer, de manera general, las percepciones de los participantes, mientras que las segundas proporcionaron información más precisa sobre cómo los participantes percibían sus habilidades y competencias. Los datos sugieren que los participantes perciben avances en sus habilidades de pensamiento crítico, habilidades de investigación, habilidades lingüísticas, autonomía, y motivación, como parte de los atributos que han logrado desarrollar dentro del programa. Sin embargo, los atributos concernientes a sus habilidades de enseñanza y de aprendizaje, habilidades tecnológicas, de trabajo en equipo, y habilidades para desarrollar nuevos proyectos e ideas, son percibidos como poco desarrollados o no desarrollados en lo absoluto.

Palabras clave: percepción de estudiantes; inglés, habilidades comunicativas; perfil del graduado; idioma extranjero; estrategias de aprendizaje

Resumo

Este artigo examina a percepção de estudantes de licenciatura, previamente a sua graduação, com relação aos atributos que desenvolveram em termos de habilidades transferíveis e comunicativas. O objetivo deste estudo foi dar uma ideia sobre como os estudantes de licenciatura, no contexto desta pesquisa, percebem o seu perfil de formado. O estudo foi realizado em uma universidade no sudeste do México no período de um ano, de agosto de 2016 a julho de 2017. Trinta alunos, entre homens e mulheres, participaram nele. Suas idades vão dos 21 aos 30 anos. Todos estavam a ponto de concluir o último semestre do programa quando se coletaram os dados. As ferramentas de coleta de dados foram enquetes e entrevistas. As primeiras se usaram para conhecer, de maneira geral, as percepções dos participantes, enquanto que as segundas proporcionaram informação mais precisa sobre como os participantes percebiam as suas habilidades e competências. Os dados sugerem que os participantes percebem avanços em suas habilidades de pensamento crítico, habilidades de pesquisa, habilidades linguísticas, autonomia, e motivação, como parte dos atributos que conseguiram desenvolver dentro do programa. Entretanto, os atributos referentes às suas habilidades de ensino e de aprendizagem, habilidades tecnológicas, de trabalho em equipe, e habilidades para desenvolver novos projetos e ideias, são percebidos como pouco desenvolvidos ou não desenvolvidos no absoluto.

Palavras chave: percepção de estudantes; inglês, habilidades comunicativas; perfil do formado; idioma estrangeiro; estratégias de aprendizagem

Introduction

Generally speaking, university students have a variety of expectations regarding their graduate profile and the attributes they expect to develop to get the desired job right after graduation. Graduate attributes refer to a large number of qualities that an individual develops at a certain point of their life and that include attitudes, values, competences, and skills (Barrie, 2006). This is precisely what this study focuses on: the achievement of graduate attributes, how these attributes were achieved, and the students' perceptions of their graduate profile, insofar as in the context of this study, having an outstanding profile appears to be important for educational institutions and employers.

These graduate attributes can be classified into two different categories: technical and transferable skills (Coromillas, 2001). Unlike technical skills, which relate to a specific discipline area of study, transferable skills focus on attitudes and communicative skills (Hager & Holand, 2006). The latter are expected to be integrated within a set of graduate attributes. Crosthwaite, Cameron, Lant, and Litser (2006) argue that the development of graduate attributes is more likely to happen when students interact in a realistic context that demand the integration and practice of these skills. Graduate attributes are complex outcomes composed by various elements and there may be challenges in building and assessing graduate attributes. Moalosi, Oladiran, and Uziak (2012) suggest that some of them are lack of time on the part of teaching staff, motivation, resources or skills needed to improve teaching, assessment approaches, and an appropriate balance between technical and transferable skills development.

Moalosi et al., (2012) explored some of the strategies that have been put into practice to develop these competencies. It has been suggested that these skills can be developed through projects and tasks. Some learner-center approaches seem to guide students through the process of acquiring knowledge and developing these skills. The introduction of projects and tasks in the curriculum may motivate students by demanding higher-level thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, effective communication, and autonomy (Prince & Felder, 2006).

Objectives

The goal of this research study was to analyze students' perceptions of their graduate profile and the academic and professional attributes they had developed prior to graduation, and whether awareness of these attributes had had any significant impact in their academic development. In this paper, we present the analysis of learners' perspectives in regards to the skills expected

in their graduate profile in the context of a B.A. program in English language; how important these skills are for them, and how these skills were developed. The approach taken for this study intended to provide answers to the following questions:

> How do undergraduate students in an English BA program perceive their graduate profile?
>
> Are students aware of the graduate attributes the university expects them to achieve?
>
> To what extent have students developed these attributes?
>
> What has been the role of the teachers in helping the participants develop graduate attributes?
>
> How has awareness of graduate attributes helped the participants be more competitive in their academic development?

Literature Review

We live in a world where there is always constant change. Thus, for new businesses or institutions, prospective employees need to meet changing job market expectations (Hadiyanto, 2010). The qualities that may help them succeed should be well-developed competences and attitudes. In the UNESCO report in 1996a, these competences, skills and abilities are categorized as the Four Pillars of Education (UNESCO 1996a; UNESCO 1996b). The UNESCO Commission (Scatolini, Maele, & Bartholomé, 2010) describes the four pillars as follows:

- Learning to know: the basic knowledge a person needs to understand how to live with dignity.
- Learning to do: it involves being creative by developing practical skills, teamwork attitude and willingness to take risks.
- Learning to live together: it means learning to be understanding. People should be able to participate in all human activities with empathy and respect.
- Learning to be: this pillar encloses the three previous ones. It refers to decisions people take, the actions they perform and the way they do these actions.

Students' Learning Outcomes

The four pillars of education are guiding principles that intend to promote skills for lifelong learning. They focus on the development of skills, competences and attitudes, and learning outcomes. These can be defined as the expected results from students enrolled in a higher education program or employees of a company. According to Nygaard, Courtney, and Bartholomew (2013), each institution describes these outcomes mainly for the following reasons: a) to show students the skills and competencies they are expected to develop during university years; b) to allow employers to review what these students are capable of doing; c) to decide whether or not students fit the profile; d) to help teachers become familiar with the objectives students need to achieve in order to take them into consideration while developing the curriculum; e) to advise faculties on which dimensions students' achievements can be measured; f) to facilitate school accreditation when authorities review a bachelor's program.

Students' learning outcomes refer to cognitive outcomes such as knowledge, competencies, skills, abilities, values, goals, attitudes, identity, personal goals, worldviews, and personal or graduate attributes (Nygaard et al., 2013) that can be seen as the measurement of what a student has actually learnt during their studies.

In general, when people refer to graduate attributes, they refer to a large number of qualities that an individual develops at a certain point of their life that include attitudes, values, competences, and skills (Barrie, 2006). Graduate attributes can be defined as "the qualities, skills and understanding a university agrees its students would desirably develop during their time at the institution and, consequently, shape the contribution they are able to make to their profession and as a citizen." (Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell & Watts, 2000, as cited in Leibowitz, 2012: 88).

As part of their graduate attributes, students are expected to develop both technical and transferable skills if they are to succeed as proficiency users of their mother tongue and of the target language. Although some educational and work settings may have their own transferable requirements (Pace, 2011), transferable skills provide individuals with the flexibility to adapt to different work settings. Some transferable skills have to do with communication, critical thinking, multitasking, teamwork, creativity, and leadership (Yates, 2006). Hargis (2011) suggests that lack of these skills may cause employers or institutions to not find graduate students joining the job market competent enough. Although graduate students most probably have technical skills, they may lack transferable skills, which may prevent them from keeping their jobs.

In the case of teachers of English, they may have the attributes they need as professionals to provide a good service and the technical skills required for

a specific task, but they may lack transferable skills, which are easily shifted from job to another (Barrie & Prosser, 2004**).** Teachers may play different roles; each requiring its own set of competences and skills. Therefore, future teachers need to learn to know, to do and to live together. One element to consider for this profession is the pedagogical knowledge they need to have; they need to be aware of different aspects of curriculum planning, assessment, reflective teaching, classroom management, language acquisition, and teaching strategies (Borg, 2006, 2009).

Another attribute is effective communication skills. They are necessary for the accomplishment of certain objectives such as learning to listen, speak, write, and communicate in nonverbal forms (Klein, 2009). They also need language skills; by the time they graduate, language students must have learnt to communicate accurately in both their mother tongue and the target language. A skill that future teachers also need is critical thinking to help them identify issues, provide solutions, make decisions and deal with different situations (Heimler, 2010, as cited in Williams, 2015). Garner and Duckworth (2000) state that critical thinking is one of the skills that employers consider during the recruitment process, along with well-developed transferable skills to succeed in their job performance. Future language teachers might also be expected to know how to work with people from other cultures or with different ideas; that is, they might need interpersonal skills that allow individuals to deal with others, (Heimler, 2010, as cited in Williams, 2015).

Developing Graduate Attributes

There is no specific methodology focusing on developing graduate attributes. Sierra (2011) claims that certain techniques such as presentations, case studies, task-based projects, problem-based projects, learning contracts, and cooperative learning help to develop some attributes. The implementation of graduate attributes may require some changes in the curriculum and that some elements be taken into consideration, such as the strategies used to facilitate their development. The strategies may vary depending on how teachers use them (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Boyle (2010) mentions that many universities have decided to review their curriculums to incorporate graduate attributes in their teaching programs so that they foster integration and flexibility.

Tan, Koppi, and Field (2006) consider project-based learning and the design project approach as helpful approaches to develop and acquire generic skills and competences. Transferable skills may be attained by exposure to realistic experiences. Lowe and Marshal (2004, as cited in Moalosi, et al. 2012) point out that students may gain a broader spectrum of graduate attributes by engaging in relevant experiences that demand the integration and practice of

these skills. However, the emphasis of curriculum design is often placed on the skills that focus on the disciplinary area but, quite often, transferable skills are not given enough attention (Moalosi et al., 2012).

Students who develop technical and transferable skills are able to function efficiently in a changing work environment. They are also able to use critical thinking skills, solve problems, communicate effectively, work in groups, and use ICT-related skills (Nettleton, Litchfield, & Taylor, 2008). Thus, students might have a lot of specific discipline knowledge, but if they do not know how to communicate, how to approach people, and work in teams, they may be seen as incompetent (Hargis, 2011).

Cooperative Learning (CL) can also help students to develop some attributes as it allows them to work together in order to accomplish shared goals (Cohen, 1994, as cited in Vermette & Kline, 2017). This approach promotes cooperation, if well guided, as it focuses on effort, cooperation, and active participation to solve issues or achieve goals as the most important basis of motivation (Snowman & McCown, 2014). Johnson and Johnson (2009, as cited in Lovat, Toomey, & Clement, 2010) claim that the best way to succeed and obtain positive interaction is by helping each other and exchanging ideas and information, and by engaging in mutual communication, influence, and trust.

Problem-based Learning (Major & Palmer, 2001; Edwards, 2005), often called Task-based or Project-based learning, can also support the development of a wide range of graduate attributes. According to Yusuf, Gambari, and Olumorin (2012), students tend to develop significant skills and competences if collaborative learning and projects in education are implemented. Moalosi et al. (2012) and Boyle (2010) carried out research based on project based learning and discovered that it enabled students to develop most of the graduate attributes desired.

Estrada, Narváez, and Núñez, (2016), highlight that students—in the context of the Bachelor's Degree in English where this study was carried out—hope to embark on a career as English teachers in the future. The students believe that the B.A program will enhance their teaching career and hope to earn a good income as a result of getting their bachelor's degree. In other words, they expect to be better off after completing their degree; once they have done so, they expect that opportunities of a better life will arise. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether or not they will be able to develop the outcomes the university expects them to achieve.

Methodology

Previous studies (Barrie, 2006; Barrie & Prosser, 2004; Corominas, 2001; Hager & Holland, 2007). have analyzed and evaluated the attributes developed by students at the end of the university years giving priority to the quantitative part only. However, in the case of the present study, knowing what students feel or think about the subject was also relevant. Therefore, it seemed adequate to analyze data obtained of a quantitative and qualitative nature (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The qualitative design of this exploratory study aimed to understand how the participants perceive their actual graduate profile, explore their experiences and perceptions whereas the quantitative design aimed at understanding what outcomes seem to be more important for the participants and to what extent these outcomes were fostered by the university throughout the years of study. The idea was to analyze combined data obtained from both perspectives, a quantitative and a qualitative methodology in the research field, in order to answer the research questions (Kumar, 2014).

The sequence of this study consists in describing the quantitative data first, followed by the description and analysis of the qualitative data in order to connect the results. This particular study relies on a follow-up explanation model where the researcher needs qualitative data to explain or expand on quantitative results (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hatson, 2003).

Data Collection Instruments

The main instruments used for data collection for this research study were interviews and surveys. Interviews offered several advantages: they can be flexible, they can be opened-ended, and they can help the researcher to understand the participants' point of view, situation, experiences, hopes and dreams (Kvale, 1996: 1). The survey, on the other hand, was devised with the purpose of analyzing the students' competences and skills.

For the interview, open-ended questions were used in order to gain access to in-depth information about the participants' perceptions regarding the skills and competences they have acquired and the graduate attributes teachers have helped the participants develop. Because of the flexibility of this type of qualitative semi-structured interview, it was possible to focus on the participant's actual experiences more than their general beliefs and opinions (King & Horrocks, 2010). The interview guide was designed keeping in mind some important concepts such as value, trust, objectivity, accuracy, honesty, and meaning.

The survey was designed using a Likert scale technique; a scale often used in research making use of questionnaires. When using this tool, the participants have to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on an agree/disagree

scale dealing with several statements. In this case, it presented participants with a series of 27 statements, for each of which the participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements by using one of a number of positions on a four-point scale designed by the researcher.

Using this scale, students were to indicate to what extent they considered important the skills and abilities the university expects them to acquire, and whether or not they had developed them throughout their degree. The four-point scale survey combined two elements: the written narrative and the Likert approach. Behavioral anchored numerical scales measure behavioral performance of others and they can provide qualitative and quantitative data.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis procedures. After collecting the data, it was categorized and coded in order to classify it for further presentation. In order to do this, the information was scanned carefully to identify the repetition of ideas, similar opinions and emotions, and shared expressions repetitions used by the participants. As a first step, the data was organized into different sets having to do with the interview questions. As a second step, the different sets of data were linked to connect patterns; this was done by establishing comparisons of the findings focusing on similarities and differences. Then, through the connection of the different categories, a sensible flow of information to support the objectives and research questions of the study emerged. As a final step, the data were prepared for presentation. All the coding and processing of the data were done manually; that is, no soft wear such as Atlas Ti, was used.

Research Context

This research was carried out in a public university in Mexico that offers a Bachelor´s Degree in English Language. This institution relies on a flexible education curriculum (Beltrán Casanova, 2005) which aims at fostering autonomous learning. There is also a Research Centre and a Self-Access Centre where students can use different materials to practice their language skills by themselves.

Ten years ago, a new educational model was adopted at the school of languages where this study took place to prepare students following holistic approach (Universidad Veracruzana, 1999). Students are now expected to achieve knowledge related to their work fields; they are also expected to be competent in the communicative abilities in both their mother tongue and the English Language and acquire some competencies and skills required for

lifelong learning. In order to be competitive in the job market, the program aims to develop autonomy, adaptability, responsibility, and a sense of professional growth in the students (Facultad de Idiomas de la Universidad Veracruzana, 2009).

The curriculum was designed to train individuals so that they achieve a sound command of English; develop skills in order to perform effectively in different work areas where English is required; and to develop language skills that will enhance their teaching skills (Facultad de Idiomas de la Universidad Veracruzana, 2009).

Research Participants

The sample presented here is part of the 2012 cohort. The study focused on those students who were about to complete the last term of the BA program. All participants were attending classes at the time of the study. Thirty students participated in the survey. From these 30, ten students were subsequently interviewed. There were four males and six females with ages ranging from 21 to 30. The study was carried out with students who had already been studying for almost 4 years and were more likely to enrich the findings of the study. All the participants were fully informed that the data provided would be used for research purposes and written consent was obtained from all of them.

Results

The presentation of results is divided into two main sections: skills and competencies developed by students, and students' skills that need improvement.

Skills and competencies developed by students

This section analyses the outcomes students have achieved; it also reports whether this university school enhanced these outcomes or not, from the point of view of the students.

Critical thinking skills. Critical thinking can be seen as an important outcome that helps the student to analyze and evaluate the contents of a specific subject. All the participants considered critical thinking relevant to their professional development: 77% of them marked this skill as very important while 23 % of them marked it as important, but not very.

Some of the participants expressed that they feel more confident and able to defend their points of view and make their own assumptions as well.

This echoes with Crossier´s (2011) claim that students can easily develop critical thinking skills if they engage in self-reflection on the responses and actions to different situations. One of the participants expressed that one of her professors had taught her to always question authors' ideas, what they say in books, and decide whether she agreed with, or thought differently about, the subject being discussed

It can be inferred from the participant's words that the school fosters this attribute. In addition, the graduate profile specifications of this bachelor´s degree program state that critical thinking is a skill that students need to develop in order to complete this program successfully.

Research skills. Research skills are thought to prepare students for the labor market; prospective graduates are expected to develop these skills by the end of the bachelor's program. Early in the program, when students are in second semester, they take classes to learn how to investigate educational issues. Likewise, at the end of the program and they have to write a final paper if they are to graduate. Due to this, 70 % of students believe that developing research skills is very important. They know that they need to put into practice what they have learned by writing a research paper. The program requires that students develop their research skills in different areas of study.

63% of the participants pointed out that research skills picked up at university would be of help when looking for resources for future assignments and projects. One participant stated that the school helped him develop research skills, to go deeper in his search for information, to find himself answers to burning questions, and not to be contented with the first thing he found.

However, 37% of the participants perceived that they did not practice research skills very often. For instance, one of the participants pointed out that professors tended to concentrate heavily on having students finish their research paper rather than on the process of doing research, which reflects Eilks and Byers´s (2009) point that a research-led curriculum often focuses on the product.

Autonomy. All those who graduate from this program must develop some degree of autonomy by the time they finish university. 67% of the participants reported that they became more autonomous in university. They considered being autonomous as a very important outcome that they must reach. It appears that the professors have contributed to the development of this skill. As one of the participants shared: "I would say that 80% of the work has to be done by ourselves". This resonates with Benson (2013), who asserts that students must be encouraged to become independent and be given the freedom to act and work as they chose. Then again, some of the participants considered that they had become autonomous because the professors did not explain things well enough and they had to look for information on their own.

English Language Skills. Some of the participants referred to English Language skills for communication as a very important outcome as it will provide them with more job opportunities. The participants seem to believe that their language skills developed considerably in the program. During the interviews, they claimed they feel happy with the knowledge acquired and mentioned that they were satisfied with the language skills they had now. They even mentioned their interest in the English culture had increased as they learnt about it.

The surveys also revealed that the participants felt confident with what they had learnt. This is something positive because language proficiency can be seen as the main attribute in their graduate profile. Students with a sound command of English are more likely to feel confident when applying for a job position. It might even mean a higher income if they get certified.

Motivation for professional development. Students often feel motivated to keep on studying, attend courses, or do something else in order to grow professionally once they finish their bachelor´s degree; some others just want to get a job. The truth is that some job positions require that prospective staff have specific qualifications such as an MA or a PhD, which can motivate students to further their academic development. Some of the participants shared their desire to take up a Master's. They see it as a stepping stone leading to a deeper knowledge of the field and a better command of English. It would also allow them to further engage in research and the possibility of publishing, or even travel abroad as part of a student exchange program

Richards and Burns (2012) suggest that this kind of motivation is dynamic as it grows while we develop different mental processes. 64% of the participants agreed on the importance of developing professional motivation. During the interviews, they mentioned that they would like to continue to grow professionally by taking up a Master´s or signing up for training courses for certification purposes.

Students' skills requiring improvement

This second section reports on the different outcomes students did not successfully achieve during their time at university.

Teamwork. Students' abilities to work in teams are an outcome that was not achieved successfully. In this study, some participants pointed out that they did not have enough opportunities to do teamwork and when they did, they preferred to work alone. The participants mentioned that it was difficult to agree when making decisions or that responsibilities were not shared equitably. Although, people often fail to collaborate due to lack of tolerance, commitment,

time, or because of their personality, Zoogah and Beugré (2012) suggest that working on group goals increases commitment and willingness to cooperate.

In spite of the advantages, interpersonal and communication problems often arise. One of the participants complained that when there was group work to do, some of his classmates did not even bother to show up, and it was usually one or two students who ended up doing all the work. Another one shared that she wanted to do her research project with a classmate but that it did not work because they could not agree on anything. Because of these issues, the participants expressed that they preferred to do their work alone as they thought they were more likely to do a better job that way than working with others. They also shared that their professors rarely encouraged teamwork and that they just did not seem to care about it. However, not being able to work in teams may be a challenge once students graduate, as teamwork skills are often highly valued by some employers.

Ability to develop new projects and ideas. The B.A. Program in English establishes that students must develop the skills to create new projects or ideas. Some of the skills involved might be innovation and creativity to be successful. Such skills are highly valued by the students. However, the participants perceive a lack of creativity and innovation in their professional development to the point that 75% of them believe neither of them is very important.

The data show that students do not feel confident in regard to creativity and innovation and they noted that some teachers at this language department are not creative when teaching a class. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why students do not work enough to achieve this outcome. Several participants said that their teachers were a little old-fashioned in terms of teaching strategies. Creativity and innovation play an important role in lesson planning; developing these skills must be a life-long commitment, not only during university years. This can be done if the teacher is willing to be a role model for creativity (Tan et al., 2006)

Technology skills in pedagogy. This B.A program seems to have a commitment to the usage of technology as a means of learning. However, students shared that only few teachers make use of technology. Their perception is that their teachers, on the whole, seem to have very little experience regarding the use of technology in class. For instance, one of the participants said that there was an interactive whiteboard in his classroom but it was never used.

Learning strategies. The use of learning strategies may vary according to students' learning styles or the purpose each learner has: some students learn through the use of visuals, others learn by listening to songs, people, or the radio; some strategies work through a specific cognitive process, others focus on the affective or psychological areas. One of the objectives the BA in

English is that students to develop learning strategies to enhance their learning outcomes.

The data point out that the participants do not believe the school has helped them develop learning strategies. The participants shared they remember answering questionnaires that would help them and their teachers determine their learning styles and the appropriate learning strategies. However, they also remember not taking these surveys very seriously and answering them carelessly. They hardly recall any strategies suggested by teachers in class, and those they do remember, such as speaking English with their classmates and teachers even outside the classroom, were ignored. The data suggest that the participants tend to rely more on their own preferences to learn English.

Teaching skills. The B.A. Program in English gives students the opportunity to enroll in different educational experiences that contribute to developing soft and hard skills. Those participants who enrolled in subjects related to language and language acquisition consider that developing teaching skills definitely enhances their teaching practice. However, some of the participants reported feeling overwhelmed while doing their social service as English teachers. One of the participants admitted lacking teaching skills; another one shared that that he recalled often feeling nervous, afraid of making mistakes, and not very well-prepared to guide his students.

The majority of the students who choose this BA often pursue a teaching career. Their perception is that the program should put greater emphasis in guiding and providing advice regarding extracurricular activities that may help them succeed in the process of becoming a teacher. Teaching is quite a challenge and teachers need a repertoire of techniques and routines, including routines and procedures for such things as opening the lesson, introducing and explaining tasks, setting up learning arrangements, checking students' understanding, guiding student practice, making transitions from one task to another, and ending the lesson (Richards & Burns, 2012).

Conclusion

The data suggest that the participants perceive critical thinking, research skills, autonomy English Language Skills, and motivation for professional development as the attributes they developed within the program. For this group of students, it was very rewarding to develop critical thinking skills that help them analyze a situation, act and behave according to the circumstances, and develop their potential.

In addition, the participants also seemed to feel satisfied with having developed research skills that allow them to work on small research problems, which in turn helps them get their foot in the door of the research community

and thus become more competent. Autonomy and language skills are also perceived as valuable gains made in the course of the BA program;

In contrast, the participants pointed out that they believed they had not made significant achievements in terms of teaching skills development, learning strategies, technology skills, teamwork and ability to develop new projects and ideas.

These outcomes are not to be overlooked. Awareness needs to be raised among all the stakeholders of the importance of enhancing these students' attributes since the labor market requires that they have these skills which enrich their graduate profile.

We hope that the results of this inquiry may provide valuable information that could help teaching professionals implement strategies to help students develop the graduate attributes the current job market finds desirable.

Limitations

Several limitations may have impacted the results and conclusions of this research study. The first is that, given that this is a case study and that all the participants belong to a single cohort, the findings cannot be generalized. Another limitation is that not all the targeted students from the BA program participated in the interviews. However, the participant sample was sufficient as it represents a significant part of the BA student population close to finishing their studies. One more limitation was that the results represent only the students' perceptions; the fact that the data are self-reported means that they could not be independently verified; we had to take what the participants said at face value. Their views could not be corroborated by other sources of data, such as the teaching staff or administration. Nevertheless, analyzing the opinions of teachers or administrators was never the objective of the study.

Implications for Future Research

In this study, only students belonging to the 2012 cohort participated. When carrying out further research, students from subsequent generations may be surveyed and interviewed to corroborate the findings and assess the possibility of a definite trend in students' perceptions of their graduate attribute, or dismiss them due to lack of consistency in the results. It would be meaningful for future studies to examine the views of professors and gain access to school documents, such as exams and students' products, to cross-examine data obtained from the interviews and surveys. Finally, focus groups that foster the discussion of student's views would be likely to enrich the findings by providing additional data.

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Tuning the chords of youth identity: A Community-Based Project focused on music in English[1]

Afinando los acordes de la identidad juvenil: Un proyecto de comunidad enfocado en la música en Inglés.

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Abstract

This is an exploratory case study implemented in a public school of Ibagué Colombia, that reports findings of a qualitative research. In this study tenth graders EFL students, explored into their local contexts, salient aspects of youth identity, that emerged from interaction with music in English. The study is framed on some basic principles of Critical Pedagogy (CP) and foundations of Community- Based Pedagogies (CBP). Content data analysis was used to examine the information obtained from the different tools of data collection: community mapping, questionnaires, recorded semi-structured interviews and notes in the teacher's journal. Finally, member checking was implemented to validate data and to increase the credibility and validity of this qualitative study. Conclusions and pedagogical implications reveal how local inquiries focused on music in English become a source for language learning and enlighten curriculum designers and teachers towards the construction of a flexible curriculum with relevant content, oriented to youth identity exploration and understanding.

Key words: Identity; Community based pedagogy (CBP); Critical Pedagogy (CP); music as a pedagogical tool.

Resumen

Este es un estudio exploratorio de caso implementado en un colegio público de Ibagué Colombia, que reporta los hallazgos de una investigación cualitativa. Para esta investigación, estudiantes de décimo grado de Inglés como lengua extranjera, exploran en sus contextos locales, aspectos sobresalientes en la identidad juvenil, que surgen a partir de la interacción permanente con la música en Inglés. El estudio está enmarcado en algunos principios básicos la teoría de Pedagogía Crítica y fundamentos de la

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Pedagogía Basada en la Comunidad. El análisis de contenido de datos fue usado para examinar la información de las diferentes herramientas de recolección de datos: mapeo de la comunidad, cuestionarios, entrevistas semi- estructuradas grabadas en video y diario de campo del docente. Finalmente, la revisión de los hallazgos por parte de los participantes fue implementada para validar los datos e incrementar la validez de este estudio cualitativo. Las conclusiones y las implicaciones pedagógicas revelan cómo las indagaciones locales enfocadas en la música en Inglés, se convierten en un recurso para la enseñanza del idioma y a su vez ilustran a diseñadores del currículo y docentes, en cuanto a la construcción de un currículo flexible, con contenido relevante orientado a la exploración y comprensión de la identidad juvenil.

Palabras clave: Identidad; Pedagogía basada en la comunidad; Pedagogía Crítica; Música como herramienta pedagógica.

Resumo

Este é um reconto de uma experiência pedagógica através de um estudo de caso, implementado em uma instituição pública de Ibagué, Colômbia, que reporta as descobertas de uma pesquisa qualitativa realizada com estudantes de 2º ano de ensino médio e alguns participantes das comunidades próximas ao colégio. O projeto visualiza alguns construtos de Pedagogia Crítica tendo em vista princípios de Metodologia Baseada na Comunidade. Os dados foram coletados e analisados sob a metodologia baseada na análise do conteúdo, em dois períodos do ano escolar, através de ferramentas tais como: Mapeamento da comunidade, questionários, entrevistas semi-estruturadas e o diário do professor. A metodologia de validação da informação dos participantes foi implementada para ajudar a melhorar a precisão e validez durante a análise dos dados. As conclusões definem o alcanço da música em Inglês sobre a construção de identidade dos jovens aprendizes, as implicações pedagógicas do estudo descrevem algumas formas nas quais os docentes podem construir um conteúdo curricular relevante através do entendimento e exploração da identidade individual os seus estudantes.

Palavras clave: Identidade; Pedagogia baseada na comunidade; Pedagogia crítica; Recursos de conhecimento; Música como pedagógica.

Introduction

Observing school students' attitudes and manners, when they are lively sharing in teams during the break time, or attending a lesson in the classroom, has grabbed my attention and has led me to reflect on how life experiences inside and outside the school may affect or model their process of individual identity construction. I also wonder which is the origin of the most common patterns that my students follow to act the way they do, and how their linguistic behavior in the English class is shaped by some cultural trends and art expressions they daily are embedded into.

As part of the reflection upon this relevant topic for my teaching practice, I registered on teachers logs my insights, these written registers guided me to realize that my students' favorite music in English enhances the development of linguistic skills and at the same time models significantly some behavioral aspects.

In 2017 the opportunity to implement a class project came and I invited the students of 10th to join it. "Through problem posing education and questioning the problematic issues in learners' lives, students learn to think critically and develop a critical consciousness which help them to improve their life conditions." (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p.77).

Bearing in mind the educative context where the present project unfolded, this qualitative study paves the way for English teachers to reflect on the possibilities to establishing curricular connections between classroom practices and students' existing funds of knowledge in their local communities where English teaching takes place.

Literature Review

Music as a pedagogical tool for English lessons

Tuning the chords of identity is the metaphor in the title of this paper that unveils salient aspects of youth identity when teachers inquire in the students upon their musical tastes and approach their worlds to give a place and voice at school. Including songs in the classroom as an effective tool for English teaching with young learners, is hugely rewarding due to some songs that can be adapted to introduce new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions in a context.

Hence, music in English should be considered a worthy pedagogical tool to keep students engaged while experiencing an insight into a new culture, without losing motivation towards the learning on L2. Among other different reasons to use songs in the EFL classroom, Schoepp (2001) exposed:

> Songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and if used in coordination with a language lesson they can be of great value. Fortunately, with the expanding prevalence of the Internet and specifically the World Wide Web into both the classrooms and lives of students, access to music and lyrics has been made easier (p.26).

It is the age of YouTube and learners can find practically any song on the website. "Songs contain authentic language, they are easily obtainable, provide vocabulary, grammar and cultural aspects and they are fun for students. Songs can provide valuable speaking, listening and language practice in and out of the classroom." (Lynch, 2012, p. 92). Likewise, teaching English through songs with L2 learners is one of the most motivating sources due to the positive relationship between music and verbal learning; this fact should not be underestimated by teachers of new generations of learners.

Musical genres that students listen to as a social practice and the lyrics they easily enjoy singing, may become pedagogical sources to enhance oral fluency in the English class, while learners get familiar with idiomatic expressions; moreover, "music in English can support the development of a positive self-identity as well as provide confidence, motivation and a sense of group belonging at an early age." (Hallam, 2010, p.273).

In summary, young people get to know themselves as individuals and as groups through cultural activities such as music interaction, nevertheless, choosing a musical genre is an individual experience and invoke emotions and associations which are highly personal.

Youth Identity and music.

Music has a transformative power for cultures, societies and individuals, it is a universal language and has the ability to transcend culture, age and gender boundaries. It can help people to cope with feelings, emotions and beliefs, even individuals from different contexts, find in music the best way to express and raise their voices to the world.

At present, the concept of identity is seen as a dynamic process rather than a static phenomenon. According to Norton (2000), identity refers to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future." (p.5).

In regards with the role of music upon the identity process in a social group, Joseph (2004) maintains, "music plays an integral part in the influence of identity upon members of society, the transformation of an individual or collective identity is determined by the constructs put in place by a society

made up of social and political standpoints that have developed through time." (p.8).

Otherwise, there is an assumption that our identities, whether group of individual, are not natural facts about us, but "They are things that we construct, fictions, in effect, identities play a significant role in our interaction with others and are part of how we think about ourselves and those around us." (Joseph, 2004, p.6).

Through music interaction, young learners start reflecting critically on lived experiences, at analyzing, exploring and discussing the lyrics of songs or approaching real life experiences of an artist. At school, the role for transformative teachers has to do with uncovering students' worlds while reflecting on their personal experiences and contributing to start processes of personal and social transformation in the communities.

Critical pedagogy

The idea of associating critical pedagogy with education has mainly been developed by some key scholars such as Freire (1970), Giroux (1992) and McLaren (2003). Critical pedagogy aims at preparing learners who can solve both their own problems and the ones related to the society, as consequence, there is a need for its users and learners to be critical in their learning and use of the language.

This study closely involves students in decisions about learning through inquiries focused on musical experiences in their neighborhoods, as a way to recognize their voices and made them part of the school curriculum. "A democratic curriculum invites young people to shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of meaning makers"(Apple, & Beane, 2007, p.63).

According to McLaren (2003), critical pedagogy is "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state" (p.35).

Under the scope of critical thinking, I was guided to unveil a truth I had not realized before and I managed to understand two realities. Firstly, students' worlds possess valuable elements that, if oriented reflectively, can enrich teaching and learning practices not only for languages, but for other subjects at school. Kumaravadivelu (2003) posits how critical pedagogy takes "seriously the lived experiences that teachers and learners bring to the educational setting." (p.89). His approach lights up curriculum designers of

educational programs and English teachers that contemplate learners as the subject of their learning.

Secondly, local communities where my students live and grow up, can offer significant information around music exploration concerning youth identity. Since these environments perform and contribute with empirical process of culture transmission and identity construction, they need to be taken into consideration at school settings, within a flexible curriculum that embraces not only theory and policies but also students' needs, skills and interests.

Community Based Pedagogies (CBP)

In this research, by means of community-based pedagogies, it was feasible to connect school practices and community knowledge environments in one school project where students succeeded to bond their own musical experiences, acquired in real-world settings with the lesson content they were taught at school. Integrating both settings brought about outstanding information that supports and reveals some aspects of youth identity building.

Community-based pedagogies are curriculum and practices that reflect knowledge and appreciation of the communities in which schools are located and students and their families inhabit. It is an asset-based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards that teachers must address, but emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning (Sharkey & Clavijo, 2012).

(CBP) helps teachers to recognize that all communities have intrinsic educational and cultural assets and resources that educators can use to enhance meaningful learning opportunities. Interestingly the concept of cultural asset is defined by Gibson (2015) as follows:

In every community that manages to sustain or revive itself over time, there are cultural factors that contribute to the vitality and robustness of the people living there. These factors are shared and creative, which is to say they are cultural, and they are assets that make life valuable, that make life worth living. These cultural assets can be material, immaterial, emotional, or even spiritual (p.112).

Likewise, CBP is an active critical pedagogy to construct relevant content through local inquiries in the community. The concept of local goes beyond a physical o geographical space, which is just a criterion, it has a sociological understanding in the theory of structuration of Giddens (1991) who states that "because we take human beings as our point of departure (instead of the world), the local is delineated by social integration, face-to-face interaction or interaction between individuals physically co-present."(p.21).

Methodology

This case study allowed the exploration of a contemporary real-life phenomenon in the classrooms, related to music in English and youth identity construction. Accordingly, Yin (2003) defines the case study "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." (p.23).

The existing case study was developed in the framework of community-based pedagogy, which made possible to intertwine essential theoretical constructs on identity with rich funds of local knowledge and music in English as a pedagogical tool, to bridge the gap between theory and practice existing in my traditional lessons which had a language approach focused on the development of some skills in isolation.

Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals.

> If qualitative research were carried out, for instance, on documents, on specific textual corpus or pictures, it would be the people's features and their actions, the productions and situations they develop or have developed, and their existence in those which would be examined to answer the research question in order to continue the analysis on the basis of those features. (Vasilachis de Gialdino,1992, p.43).

Next framework, as explained in the Didactic Unit, see Appendix 1, guided this exploratory case, to achieve the proposed goals along the development of the project and answer the following research question: *How is tenth grade EFL students' identity revealed through local inquiries focused on music in English?*

Table 1. Community-based Pedagogy design adapted from Sharkey and Clavijo (2012).

Research	**Teaching**
Observation of community practices. Community scanning /mapping	Understanding learning as a social practice within a community
Investigating community knowledge and practices Funds of knowledge	Reflecting and identifying key aspects of community practices
Examining how the curriculum is constructed and for whom. Developing research projects that address community issues in the language classroom	Establishing possible connections with the curriculum content Reflecting upon the implications in their teaching

Since this is a qualitative study, "Content Data Analysis" was selected as the methodology to conduct the examination of data collected from the instruments and processes. Lochmiller and Lester (2015) point out that "The data analysis process in qualitative research is often uniquely influenced by the qualitative methodology selected, as well as the theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks that frame the study" (p.40).

Instruments for data collection.

Mapping the community

According to Crane and Skinner (2003) "Community mapping is a process that requires strong partnerships; clear goals that everyone in the partnership supports; good communication; commitment to collecting relevant data and analyzing the data for gaps and overlaps."(p.5). Mapping was the initial instrument to start the process of observation, discussion, note-taking, and photographic register for a deep inventory of the students' contexts. Initially, students were told to talk to teenagers or young members in their communities, who exhibited visible similarities and traces of identity with singers or bands of music in English and agreed to take some pictures. After analyzing this inventory of photographic evidence, names of their favorite singers and bands, musical genres and external aspects of music effects on young members of the community were unveiled.

Experiencing mapping their own local surroundings gave my students a factual vision of some members in their *local contexts*, yet, students could recognize that both interviewers and interviewees had in common similar behavioral features and visible traces, which have been shaped by the impact of the music in English. Also inquiring into some local contexts contributed to raise awareness in the researcher and the group of students, towards the connection that must exist to join community assets and cultural resources with schooling

Video-recorded interviews

Semi-structured interviews were videotaped as a convenient way to provide detailed information about the social context of each participant in a setting. Scenarios for the video recordings were participants' houses, bedrooms, living rooms and the school yard, all of them within the nearest communities to school. With regards to semi-structured interviews, Fox (2009) maintains that "they are useful when collecting attitudinal information on a large scale, […] responses can either be tape-recorded or written down by the interviewer" (p.6). Finally, data collected from video recordings were transcribed by the

researcher and codified in categories and subcategories by using excel charts in *OTranscribe* online software.

Questionnaires

In this study, two questionnaires for the students were conducted, the first one, with six questions that sought to find out students' preferences and names of their favorite artists or bands, and their possible reactions when being in touch with these musical genres.

The inquiries for the second questionnaire focused on students' beliefs about the things that model their identity and their perception of music and its effects on them. This questionnaire was integrated to the study in an introductory workshop, after watching a video from Youtube. Ambriz, N Peñuelas,N; Beltrán, A. (2015). It is an inspiring video, related to youth and identity, which offered certain connections with the community project and at the same time encouraged the students to go forward researching into their communities.

Teacher´s journal

The teacher's journal was used to register entries that reported teaching experiences while carrying out the study, as well as class events round the research during regular English lessons. Moreover, students' insights that were commented in class in regards to the learnt experiences while participating in the different stages of this research, were taken into account in this journal.

Keeping notes that described in detail the process I followed with my students to conduct the study, became a useful tool that validated similar findings in data analysis. Gebhard (1999) defines how a teacher journal "can create an opportunity to confront the affective aspects of being a teacher, including what annoys, disconcerts, frustrates, encourages, influences, motivates and inspires us" (p.79). Although writing a diary was time-consuming, the result was a database which allowed me checking the insight that consolidated the categories.

Research context and participants

This research project was implemented in one of the most traditional public schools of the city, its academic population is 2.897 divided in primary and secondary levels and there are two shifts, afternoon and morning; according to some regulations and policies of the Ministry of Education in two years the school will have only one shift.

This Community Based study was implemented with the support of twenty-five EFL female tenth-graders, with A1 proficiency level according to the CEFR, these girls are aged fourteen to seventeen, and most of them are interested in learning English.

Students belong to a middle-class stratum and some of them come from different cities because of their parents' jobs, most of these pupils have been studying since primary level in the same institution.

Validation of the information

With the purpose of validating the data provided by the participants, Member Checking was implemented. It is a technique used by researchers to help improve the validity, accuracy, credibility and transferability "the interpretation and report (or a portion of it) is given to participants in order to check the authenticity of the work, their comments serve as a check on the viability of the interpretation." (Creswell, 1994, p.158).

Informants may also be asked to read any transcripts of dialogues in which they have participated. Here the emphasis should be on whether the informants consider that their words match what they intended. Lincoln and Guba (2009) highlighted that "through research interviews, for member checking, participants gain reflection, self-awareness, finding a voice, obtaining information, and venting repressed emotions." (p.551).

Findings

The following categories establish key connections with the main constructs exposed in the theoretical framework. Theory was fundamental during the process of shaping the preliminary categories and subcategories that emerged during the analysis. Consequently, they are presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 2. Research question and Categories

Research Question	**Categories**
How is tenth grade EFL students' identity revealed through local inquiries focused on music in English?	Imitation, a form of social interaction.
	Admiration, just an emotional impact.
	Identification, and seeking self-image.
	Music enhances English learning

Imitation, a form of social interaction.

(CBP) oriented this study upon the knowledge of the community through local inquiries in recorded interviews and questionnaires, excerpts from these tools revealed that all the participants in the study admitted having a deep appeal by at least two or three singers of music in English, and also showed their awareness on the effects that continuous music exposure have triggered on them.

> *"He tratado de imitar a Serj Tankian ya que es un tipo que usa unos looks rockeros geniales, por lo general tiene algún accesorio que me gustaría tener siempre." (STU, 9, questionnaire, March, 2017).*

> *"El primer cambio físico que realicé fue colorearme un mechón, luego lo pinté de rosa, luego seguí con un tatuaje de calavera que Avril Lavigne precisamente también lo tiene en su brazo izquierdo. Sin duda alguna otro gran cambio que me gustaría hacer por el gusto que ha dejado Lavigne es otro tatuaje de una estrella, en la muñeca." (STU, 4, video recording transcription, May 2017).*

Hopper (2010) claims that "Trends that singers exhibit along their performances, impact on teens in different ways, those styles become fashions when teenagers in particular come under the strong influence of the media projection of their favorite singers and bands and start imitating." (p.23). Imitation as a form of social integration in a group, defines an important aspect of youth identity in teens; in fact, photographic registers in the community mapping, displayed patterns in external expressions like fashion styles, shoes, make up, accessories, haircuts, and tattoos that most of the adolescents copy or even imitate from the artists.

Admiration, just an emotional impact.

In this category the empathy some participants have developed upon particular attitudes, fashion trends or physical features adopted from their musical idols, does not go beyond substantially over the construction of their individual identities; this sense of admiration, neither permeates nor models significant traits on them.

However, outcomes in data analysis evidenced, participants' critical thinking ability in front of topics related to some life philosophies and life styles which are transmitted in the lyrics and videos they have access to. This sense of admiration generates on them uplifting and inspiring feelings towards the character and personality of many musical idols.

> "*Admiro a Ed Sheeran porque sus canciones de verdad son muy hermosas, él es muy humilde a pesar de tener toda la fama, no pierde*

su sencillez. Uno se pone a mirar aquí en Colombia el reggaeton y todo eso, las canciones degradan a la mujer, en cambio él es diferente, sus canciones son bastante diferentes, dice todo lo que una mujer quiere escuchar de un hombre y eso me llama la atención." (STU, 10, video recording transcription, May, 2017).

"Siento admiración por muchos cantantes porque a pesar que la vida de ellos en la niñez fue muy dura, salen adelante, y la letra de las canciones trae enseñanzas."

(STU,10, questionnaire, March 2017).

Having in mind that CBP calls for the understanding of learning as a social practice within a community, it was found that by means of social networks, fans are used to be well acquainted with some social causes addressed by artists in benefit of certain communities or even for the natural environment care. This knowledge allowed the research participants to recognize in their musical idols some human values such as the kindness, humanism, strength and perseverance, on this way admiration goes forward the physical appearance they can observe.

Identification, and seeking self-image.

It has been shown that music is a source of social cognitive norms that impact the development of adolescents' self-concept. In this vein, Côté, (2009) points out that "Adolescents evaluate their physical attractiveness and self-worth by comparing themselves with music media characters." (p.266). Excerpts that support this category were taken from the video transcriptions in the original language of the recordings.

"Me identifico con la música de Adele, pienso que, en algunas ocasiones, sus gestos, su forma de maquillaje, ella es como muy colorida, más que todo en su música, el tipo de música que me gusta influye en mi como en las demás personas, su ritmo es suave." (STU,1, video recording transcription, May 2017).

"I feel identified with Lana del Rey. My favorite type of music is alternative pop. Her vintage style. I like her because she is of other age and she is a little classic."(STU,2, video recording transcription, May 2017).

Hargreaves, Miell and Macdonald (2002) maintain that, music can be used increasingly as a means by which we formulate and express our individual identities. We use it not only to regulate our own everyday moods and behaviors, but also to present ourselves to others in the way we prefer. (p.1).

Music enhances English learning

Despite the practice and development of a special skill was not pursued as a research goal, this study can describe ways in which teachers can construct relevant content through identity exploration and local inquiries focused on music in English. Class activities must involve real content, and teachers must be creative at developing their teaching process in order to carry out exciting and challenging tasks focused on real life situations.

> *"Soy como Hanna Montana (Miley Cyrus) porque la verdad canto como ella, bailo como ella, actúo y bailo como ella baila en los conciertos, en esa serie aprendí a pronunciar bien el Inglés y aprender más muchas palabras y aprender a traducirlas." (STU,03,video recording, May 2017).*

Additionally, Schoepp (2001) explains that "Songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and if used in coordination with language lessons they can be of great value." (p.148).

Pedagogical strategies outlined in the didactic unit I designed, allowed students whether to tackle a team work activity, by preparing a TV musical show performance, or to start designing and writing individually a magazine focused on their favorite singer or band. Yet, content-based lessons tap into students interests, when English syllabus relates to the topics that are familiar for them.

Conclusions

The central purpose for this research project was to unveil salient aspects of youth identity that emerged from students' inquiries about music in English. To reach this objective Critical Pedagogy and Community Based Pedagogy provided the theoretical support and framed this exploratory case study where outcomes obtained showed that:

Local inquiries used as a pedagogical tool, allowed the active participation of each one of the students and favored the integration of rich funds of knowledge in students' families and social contexts with meaningful practices for English learning at school.

Thus, a clear acknowledgement of funds of knowledge in the local communities where students inhabit and are growing up, enabled the researcher to have access to outstanding information related to participants' personal experiences in connection with music and self- identity construction.

Thus, Symbolic interaction that occurs between music celebrities and participants was revealed in three levels clearly defined. Imitation is a higher

level for participants who exhibited solid and marked traces of identity with a musical idol. The second one, Admiration, is the lowest level of incidence, now that teens are not touched in a significant way and they do not present external evidences of identity with an artist, admiration is manifested just in an emotional stage. The last one is Identification; this intermediate level gathers young people who feel extremely identified with a musical idol but do not present visible features they own just conceptual or attitudinal reasons.

In this research project, students' community assignments conducted through (CBP) and framed on Critical Pedagogy foundations, raised researchers' awareness on the relationship between schooling and families, across multiple dimensions and changing perspectives of neighborhoods and local communities. Drawing on the interaction between school and community, the fourth category focuses on how the funds of knowledge must be understood as key elements to connect school, homes and communities with a curricular design that integrates cultural assets and learning areas in which music and society are intertwined through engaging lectures, insightful interviews, challenging assignments, interesting readings, and of course a lot of musical interaction.

Considering that music in English is one of the most remarkable cultural elements for new learners' generations, it must be considered by curriculum designers and teachers as a powerful pedagogical resource. Most of the stories behind the lyrics, appealing music content, catchy news and biographies of singers and musicians, become useful resources that motivate English learning and increase language practice due to music covers a number of touchy topics that raise students' interests and emotions.

Regrettably, scarce English teaching practices, that privilege the use of grammar rules as the main purpose for English learning, undervalue this new generation of students who are able to develop communicative skills which can embody a convergence of culture and identity.

Classroom projects related to music and songs in English involve the use of real language, improve teaching and learning through a variety of resources to be included in lesson planning. In other words, class activities must involve real content, and teachers must be creative at developing their teaching process in order to carry out exciting and challenging tasks focused on real life situations.

Pedagogical implications

This community-based study contributes to the educational setting, by integrating local inquiries as a pedagogical tool to look for relevant information in our students' worlds, which most of the time are unknown or misunderstood

by teachers and curriculum planners. Hence, integrating students' needs and backgrounds with a flexible and negotiated curriculum where they may have a voice and a space in the school context, it may results in students more tolerant, aware and better leaders, who are able to promote deep and analytical thinking not only at school settings but also in their communities.

From my experience in this project, I state that local communities as sources of knowledge, enlighten curriculum designers and teachers with a valid understanding of the cultural assets and funds of knowledge that constitute our students lives and permanently stand their process of identity construction. Moreover, a clear appreciation of students' past experiences, musical tastes, interests, skills and beliefs in regards with music in English, enhance opportunities to propose English lessons with a relevant content and engage learners with meaningful and enjoyable experiences that empower students to succeed at language learning.

In regards with social identity construction, I could evidence in my group of students an improvement in their learning processes and their personal development at expressing freely themselves, sharing life experiences, and recognizing their peers as unique individuals. In sum, it was by means of inquiring in their communities that they recognize the self and the others.

Besides, this research study tackles adolescence as a treasured stage in the human development process for self-identity building, where school practices have a prominent role at addressing opportunities for growing and personal development, as well as cope with the frustrations and challenges that students face during this stage. Yet, for English teachers it is paramount to acknowledge that music as a key component for self and collective identity, permeates students' lives at diverse levels to the extent that the music students identify with, during their early teens often becomes the music that stays with them throughout their life.

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Author

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Apendix 1

Didactic Unit

In what ways do community inquires offer 10th grade students at a public school opportunities to explore the ways music in English permeates youth identity construction?

Teacher: Edna Mercedes Bonilla Salazar

General Objective: To approach student's context to inquire about the incidence of music in English upon the construction of identity in local communities.

Standards:

1. Participo en conversaciones en las que puedo explicar mis opiniones e ideas sobre temas generales personales y abstractos.

2.Identifico los valores de otras culturas y eso me permite construir mi interpretación de su identidad

3. En un texto identifico los elementos que me permiten apreciar los valores de la cultura angloparlante.

4.Opino sobre los estilos de vida de la gente de otras culturas apoyándome en textos escritos y orales previamente estudiados

Date	Activity	Objective	Community Sources	Outcomes
From march 6th to march 31st	Observation of community practices Consolidating questions and objectives.	Outlining the cultural features in young members of the community.	Funds of knowledge	Music and Identity landscape
	Keeping the teachers' journal	Mapping the students' social and familiar contexts.	School, and neighborhoods	Cultural features to focus on the mapping.
	Selecting the assets to work with in the communities.		Family context	
	Methodological design of instruments Mapping		-Group Dancing Competition -Rehearsals and Final Performance	
	Students take some pictures of people in their communities and identify potential participants.			Photos of young members in the community
From April 3rd to April 29th	Investigating Community Knowledge and Practices. Instruments design	Identifying through an interview key aspects of the incidence of music in English in the construction of Individual identity.	School students young members in the communities and students' friends 11 videos and 1 podcast	Inquiry questions for participants.
	Inquiry plan Semi structured interviews and video recordings	Analyzing the video recordings of the students and finding commonalities throughout the answers		Video recordings and semi structured interview.
	Keeping the teacher's journal			Charts with Transcriptions from the videos

May 1st to May 19 th	To raise awareness on the topic. Students watched and analyzed a video from Youtube related to music and Identity in young people.	Inquiring about students' music preferences and reasons to admire their favorite singers		Data from Students' insights and opinions in the Questionnaire
	Data collection and analysis	Analyzing students voices		Data Analysis and construction of the categories
May 20th to June 1st	To determine what standards and competences from the National curriculum are suitable to support the project.	Establishing possible connections with the curriculum content.	Video recording Transcriptions	
	Examining how curriculum is constructed	Understanding learning as a social practice within a community.		Curricular connections with community issues.
From June 5th to June 23rd	Data collection	Reflecting upon the implication of music incidences (effects) in young learners teaching.		
	Organizing Data from the different instruments	Organizing and analyzing the information collected to find commonalities	"Juegos interclases" Dancing performance As a cultural source	
August	Defining students' artifacts		English Day as a cultural resource	Students artifacts
	Meeting the findings and Reflecting upon the conclusions and pedagogical implications of the research			Students performance.
				Licenal music awards. Oral performance
				15 written Magazines on Identity
September	Member Checking		Eleven graders at school	Validation of the information.

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Constructing sense of community through Community inquiry and the implementation of a negotiated syllabus[1]

Construyendo sentido de comunidad a través de la investigación comunitaria y la implementación de un programa de estudios negociado

Paola Andrea Gómez and Julio Andrés Cortés-Jaramillo[2]*
Universidad del Tolima, Colombia

Abstract

The following paper describes the outcomes and insights of the first stage of an action research study aimed to explore ways in which CBP and NC strengthen sense of community and provoke actions to benefit that community is a public school located in a rural area. This work emerged from a needs analysis study in which students gave their opinions about the importance of English as a foreign language. Implementing CBP and Negotiated Syllabus as means to involve and foster students to be aware of their responsibility for the preservation of the school facilities, as well as educating the surrounding community, demonstrated the development of sense of community in the students. Throughout the use of questionnaires, surveys and journals, the outcomes revealed that students felt more motivated when they are taken into account in making curricular decisions. In addition, this study showed that a commitment from the entire academic community is possible when some academic and personal goals are established collaboratively and efforts are made to generate important changes.

Keywords: Sense of Community; Community Based Project; negotiated syllabus; needs analysis; critical pedagogy.

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Resumen

Este artículo describe los resultados y hallazgos de un estudio de investigación cuyo objetivo fue explorar cómo a través de la implementación de tres pilares: Pedagogía basada en la comunidad (CBP), Plan de estudios negociado y Sentido de comunidad se fortalece el sentido de comunidad, así como generar actitudes y acciones que beneficien a la comunidad. Este trabajo surgió de un estudio de análisis de necesidades en el que los estudiantes dieron su opinión sobre la importancia del inglés como segundo idioma. Implementar proyectos basados en la comunidad y la negociación de un plan de estudios como medios para involucrar y alentar a los estudiantes a tomar conciencia de su responsabilidad en la preservación de las instalaciones escolares, así como educar a la comunidad circundante, lo que evidencia desarrollo de sentido de comunidad de parte de los estudiantes. Mediante el uso de cuestionarios, encuestas y diarios, los resultados revelaron que los estudiantes se sintieron más motivados cuando fueron tenidos en cuenta en la toma de decisiones curriculares. Además, este estudio mostró que es posible un compromiso de parte de toda la comunidad académica cuando se establecen colaborativamente algunos objetivos académicos y personales, y se aúnan esfuerzos para generar cambios importantes.

Palabras claves: Sentido de la comunidad; Proyectos basados en la comunidad; plan de estudios negociado; análisis de las necesidades; pedagogía crítica.

Resumo

Este artigo descreve os resultados e descobertas de um estudo de pesquisa cujo objetivo foi explorar como através da implementação de três pilares: Pedagogia baseada na comunidade (CBP), Plano de estudos negociado e Sentido de comunidade fortalece o sentido de comunidade, bem como gerar atitudes e ações que beneficiem a comunidade. Este trabalho surgiu de um estudo de análise de necessidades no qual os estudantes deram a sua opinião sobre a importância do inglês como segundo idioma. Implementar projetos baseados na comunidade e a negociação de um plano de estudos como meios para envolver e animar os estudantes para tomar consciência da sua responsabilidade na preservação das instalações escolares, bem como educar a comunidade circundante, o que evidencia desenvolvimento de sentido de comunidade por parte dos estudantes. Mediante o uso de questionários, enquetes e diários, os resultados revelaram que os estudantes se sentiram mais motivados quando foram levados em consideração na tomada de decisões curriculares. Além disso, este estudo mostrou que é possível um compromisso de parte de toda a comunidade acadêmica quando se estabelecem de forma colaborativa alguns objetivos acadêmicos e pessoais, e se reúnam esforços para gerar mudanças importantes.

Palavras chaves: Sentido da comunidade; Projetos baseados na comunidade; plano de estudos negociado; análise das necessidades; pedagogia crítica

Introduction

Over time, schools have been seen as the places where learners receive knowledge and get instructed in specific areas which will help students to acquire certain skills, attitudes and aptitudes that allow them to become participants in a competitive world (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). As a result, students have been considered as objects, containers that need to be filled with content knowledge, and teachers are those who own the knowledge and have the responsibility of transmitting it to their students (Larson, 2014). Currently, the students´ passive role has been transformed into a more active role and the goals of schooling are more concerned with the dispositions that students present and the identities they form as well as the "content" of the curriculum that they are required to achieve; thus, it is clear that the activities in which they engage cannot be focused simply on the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge. Thereby, schools should be the places in which students are apprenticed into a way of living, thinking, feeling and acting as well as the dispositions and knowledge they will need to play a part in transforming societies (Wells, 2002). Besides, students' opinions and interests have become a very important part of their learning process and they have been considered in the designing of school's syllabuses. Therefore, Community Based Pedagogy is an educational practice that has become a framework in which teachers and students can explore and work for their communities. Sharkey (2012, p.11) asserts "Community based pedagogy is an asset-based approach that not only recognizes the importance of the curriculum standards that teachers need to address in their lessons, but also emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning". Under this theory, students and teachers work together to identify issues that affect their communities and look for alternatives that allow them to deal with them and find possible solutions to those issues.

Being aware of the importance of changing our perspectives and points of view regarding the new roles of teachers and students, and the relevance of including students' needs, expectations, and desires in the construction of a negotiated syllabus, we conducted a needs analysis in a public school to be included in the design of a curricular unit that allows to encourage students to have a voice in the decision-making process regarding their learning process. Through the application of the instruments for gathering the information (a questionnaire and interviews), we could notice that students felt their opinions were considered as they were asked how they would like to be taught. The results obtained after the application of the instruments showed that students gave special relevance to the learning of a foreign language, as they consider it is important for their future professional lives and it will give them the opportunity to interact with people from other countries. In addition, despite they do not dedicate too much time to their learning process, most of them

consider they have good and regular performance on the subject. Besides, the majority of the interviewees assert that the classes should be more dynamic, for instance they should include games and projects to be developed in group work, and that the classes should be focused on the development of the language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking), but linked to topics related to their daily lives.

The main outcomes of such analysis lead us to design a curricular proposal based on the communicative approach, through which students could express meanings that were important to them and their lives (Brown, 1995). In other words, the communicative approach permits students to use the language for a real purpose, that is, to communicate relevant ideas in regard with their context. In addition, the negotiated syllabus needs to be oriented toward the design of a layered or mixed syllabus that combines the topical with the skills-based syllabus. In this vein, the topics chosen by students were used as a starting point to define the activities students needed to follow in order to develop the different language skills. Finally, the use of the communicative approach and the set of this layered syllabus, which included students' preferences and expectations, allowed students to be more confident within the classroom, to take a more participative role, and to enhance their performance in their learning process, and finally, turned into better results regarding their knowledge acquisition.

Literature Review

Through the years, the philosophy of education has been taken a social touch in order to revolutionize education in the traditional way, advocating a view of teaching as a democratic act, rejecting the imposition of knowledge, and bringing to the classroom principles of social justice in the teaching and learning process (Giroux, 2007). The aim of this research is to transform our classrooms to awake the critical consciousness of the students in order to encourage them to become agents of change in their world through social critique and political action.

Critical Pedagogy and Negotiated syllabus

Paulo Freire's philosophy of critical pedagogy is a learner-centered approach that is focused on problem posing in which the students engage in critical dialogue. In critical pedagogy problems are posed by the learners, who determine the main content of the lesson; this is what Freire called "problem posing". Freire's problem-posing educational method includes three stages: listening, dialogue, and action. These three stages require critical thinking in the sense that involves participants´ reflections in order to stablish some

changes in the curriculum design: In the first step, the teacher has to listen to the learners and identify their needs; then the teacher must provide some options based on the students´ needs to dialogue; the last of these steps involves praxis, which consists of an ongoing cycle of reflection and action (Larson, 2014). In this way, we can design a negotiated syllabus regarding these critical thinking steps, which are close, related to the process of designing a curriculum.

Designing a negotiated syllabus is time-consuming due to it implies not only contributions based on our experiences as teachers but also, and most important, it implies student's needs analysis. Taking into account students voices is what makes negotiated syllabuses successful due to the fact that it develops learner´s autonomy. According to Nation and Macalister (2009) "A negotiated syllabus involves the teacher and the learners working together to make decisions at many of the parts of the curriculum design process" (p.149). In this way, we give recognition to students´ voice by providing the opportunities to decide some activities and topics of their interest. It also means contents are organized and developed according to students' needs and interests (Ortiz, 2006, p.11).

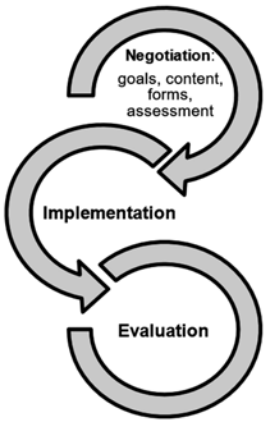


Figure 1. Negotiated syllabus involves three steps: negotiating the goals, content, forms and assessment of the course; implementing these negotiated decisions; evaluating the effect of the implementation in terms of outcomes and the way the implementation was done and this would lead to a return step (Nation & Macalister, 2009, p.152-153).

On the other hand, action research involves four phases in a cycle that may become an ongoing spiral of cycles which repeat until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop. One cycle in action research has four phases that include: planning, action, observation and reflection (Burns, 2009).

In this sense, implementing a negotiated syllabus seems to agree with action research, because both are cyclical processes that seek for continuous improvement according to the way it is implemented and evaluated. Setting a parallel between negotiated syllabus and action research, the phases that compound each cycle are related as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Parallel between Negotiated syllabus and action research.

Phases that compound each cycle	**Negotiated syllabus**	**Action research**
	Negotiation	Planning
	Implementation	Action
	Evaluation	Observation and reflection

Community Based Learning and Community Based Pedagogy

Community based learning refers to a variety of methods, programs and strategies that educators conduct to link the curricular aspects to the surrounding communities, including local institutions, scholar subjects, cultural aspects and natural environments (Abbott, 2014). This type of learning is motivated by the belief that every community has intrinsic educational assets that can be used for educators to improve students' learning experiences. According to Cooper, He, and Levin (2011) Community Based Learning is an action-oriented method to help teachers to educators learn more about other cultures, especially the home communities of their students. This pedagogical strategy not only links theory to practice, but also allows educators to immerse themselves in cultures different from theirs. In this sense, this strategy implies educators and students working together in pursuing a common goal that has a positive impact in their communities. In addition, Community-based pedagogies are practices that give important relevance to the role of the educational community members with regard to the identification of different issues that affect them, the planning of certain strategies and actions to deal with such issues, and the execution of a resulting plan in order to intervene the identified issues. Besides, it is an asset-based approach that not only recognizes the importance of the curriculum standards that teachers need to address in their lessons, but also it emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning (Sharkey & Clavijo, 2016). In other words, community-based pedagogies allow teachers and students to be more aware of their social responsibility regarding the different issues that affect in a certain way their communities, and make them active participants in the problem-solving process of those issues.

With the implementation of community based learning and community based pedagogies we seek to engage and empower students in issues that affect

their community and use those issues to contribute in their learning process. Finally, it is also necessary the involvement of the surrounding community as an integral part of the educational institution in order to make them guarantors of the preservation of the school facilities.

Sense of community and sense of belonging

According to Rovai (2002, p.322) defines sense of community as the feeling of belonging that members have, a sensation that they are important to one another and to the group, that they have duties and obligations to each other and specially to the school, and the expectations that members have in common and turns out that educational needs will be met through their commitment to shared learning goals. This definition has four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections.

According to McMillan (1996) these four elements and attributes are triggered once there is a threat in the community; for example, the school community is threatened by the damage that people from the town are doing to the school facilities. In the sense that we can empower our students to have sense of community towards their school, they will feel the necessity to take actions to protect it and seek for possible solutions to the problems they are having at school. Moreover, Fandiño-Parra, Y. J., Bermúdez-Jiménez, J. R., & Lugo-Vásquez, V. E. (2012) assert that teachers, students and also parents need to propose alternatives to promote the construction and consolidation of new identities, relationships and collective practices in and outside the classrooms and the institution itself, which leads to the construction of the sense of community.

Additionally, Hall (2014) refers to sense of belonging as a "human need", just like the need for food and shelter. A sense of belonging to a greater community such as the school improves people's motivation and engagement.

Methodology

This study was conducted at a public school in Planadas Tolima, during the second half of the academic year 2017. The municipality is located in the south of the department of Tolima, in the foothills of Cordillera Central, branch of the Colombian Andes. It is located eight hours by car from Ibagué. The municipality has 36,000 inhabitants, of which 11,000 live in the urban area. 33% are children and 21% are adolescents; regarding the educational level, coverage in primary education was 100%, while in secondary education it reached 76% according to 2014 statistics (Caracol Radio, 2016).

This institution hosts a great number of students which included our participants who were fifteen students from 10th and 11th grade who attended English class three hours per week. The students' ages ranged between 14 to 18 years old. Their English proficiency is limited due to the lessons they had attended over previous years had been taught by teachers that did not manage the language. In addition, it has been known that the majority of students from public schools have a low English level in relation to private schools due to the superiority of private over public schools regarding quality of education (Sanchez Jabba, 2013). For that reason, action research came up with the desire to improve students learning of a foreign language through Community Based Projects. We also believe that action research combined with Community Based Projects contributes to the engagement of students in collaborative relationships, opening new 'communicative spaces' in which dialogue and development can flourish, and target language can be used in a meaningful way, seeking to address issues of significance concerning the flourishing of the students, their communities, and the wider ecology in which we participate. In addition, action research cannot be predetermined but changes and develops as those engaged (teachers, students and local community) deepen their understanding of the issues that concern them and develop their capacity as co-inquirers both individually and collectively (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 4).

Furthermore, the implementation of a negotiated syllabus allows students to take an active and participative role within the planning process as they act as contributors by giving their ideas and suggesting the way they would like to be taught. Davies (2006) suggests the use of questionnaires to gather students´ opinions on what kind of activities and topics should be taken into account for the design of a negotiated syllabus; they are relatively easy to implement and students feel that their opinions have been considered and put into action. As a result, their level of commitment has improved and they have become more aware of their learning process in order to achieve the stated objectives.

Pedagogical Design

The pedagogical design involves the different stages and activities that were considered important to achieve the goals of this study. A first stage consisted in the application of a questionnaire, in which students chose responses to questions related to their interest about the language, its level of importance for them, aspects to be included in English class. In the second stage, we designed a proposal which included different topics to be worked on class, the students' participation was a key factor in the selection of the topics they wanted to learn; the teacher presented a table which contained suggested topics, skills to be developed, and activities as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Suggested topics, skills to be developed and activities for the negotiated curriculum.

TOPICS	SKILL	ACTIVITIES
The environment	- Reading: Matching - Writing: Copying - Speaking: Conversation - Listening: For the main ideas	- Photos session - Brochure - Conversation - Song - Game - Role play - Poster
Fears and phobias	- Reading: Predicting - Writing: A personal paragraph - Speaking: Word games - Listening: for the main ideas	- Describe your phobia (s) - Game - Poster - Conversation - Video
Inventions	- Reading: Some history - Writing: An innovative invention - Speaking: Describing an	- Talk about the most important inventions in the world - Poster

Afterwards, the students made some suggestions about how those topics should be carried out and they gave several ideas for the activities that each topic had to include in order to have a more dynamic class. A third stage was focused on the design of a curricular proposal in which the opinions and suggestions of the students were considered and included, also the proposal had to be aligned to the national standards and the basic learning rights. At this point, the evaluation was done as a formative process, implementing Proactive Classroom Management strategies in which the teacher facilitated learning and focused on students´ achievements and development of academic skills (Shecter, 2010). In addition, the class included teacher´s observation in order to make the necessary adjustments to guarantee the accomplishment of the final goal of the proposal. Consequently, at the end of the subunits it was established the procedure in which the intervention of students was reflected and it served as a description of how the unit had to be addressed. This procedure was used as a way to evidence the high role of participation that students had to develop within the proposal, as well as it allowed us to identify the key factors that had to be evaluated.

Finally, a fourth stage corresponded to the implementation of the proposal in which the teacher and the students worked together to set-up the different activities and the development of the skills contained in the proposal through the selected topics by students as vehicles to achieve the learning goals. As mentioned in the previous stage, the evaluation was done through observation to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the curricular unit, thereby adjusting those issues that required any modification.

According to Macalister & Nation (2013, p.127) "the evaluation looks for strengths and weaknesses but it is naturally the weaknesses that cause concern" which means that we had to pay more attention to treat those weaknesses that students presented from the evaluation. Thus, the evaluation for this curricular unit was focused on identifying the quality of learning and teaching, the quality of the curricular unit, and the students-teacher's satisfaction (Nation & Macalister, 2009). The quality of learning was done through class-observation and interviews to students. Regarding the class-observation we used a rubric to measure the students´ weaknesses and strengths in order to give more assertive feedback to them and also to register the advances they achieved during the implementation of the project. On the other hand, interviews to students were done in order to listen to their opinions about their feelings and perceptions about the curricular unit implementation.

Findings

In this section, we present the findings and discussion of the information collected during the application of Community Based Pedagogy and negotiated curriculum in our English class. Those findings can be pooled in three main aspects: Students' raising awareness, taking action by students and the community, and students' language improvement. A first aspect to be analyzed has to do with the students' awareness. Since they were involved in Community-based pedagogies and their opinions and thoughts were included in the course design, their perception and feelings about the purpose of education changed significantly. They began to see their neighborhoods as the place in where they could embed the knowledge they received in their classes with different aspects and issues of their communities. For instance, during the mapping of the community, most of the students found interesting the fact that they could use English as a tool to express their feelings about the different issues that affected their community. Besides, they started to be conscious of how the level of effects of those issues swayed their communities and they posed possible alternatives in pursuit of solutions for those issues. An aspect to analyze during this stage has to do with a growing willingness of most of the students on changing their minds about the way the class was directed as shown in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*. They understood that the course contents can

be acquired using a non-traditional method and the issues in their community can be used as an alternative manner to address those contents.

Figure 2. Statistics from the needs analysis, where the majority of the students expressed their learning preferences.

Figure 3. Statistics from the needs analysis survey, where students expressed that they wanted their English class to be more focused on developing language skills.

The main outcomes of such statistical analysis lead us to design a curricular proposal based on the communicative approach, through which students can express meanings that are important to them and their lives (Brown, 1995). In other words, the communicative approach allows students to use the language for a real purpose, that is, to communicate relevant ideas in regard with their context. In addition, the negotiated syllabus was oriented toward the design of a layered or mixed syllabus that combined the topics with the skills-based syllabus as shown in Table 2.

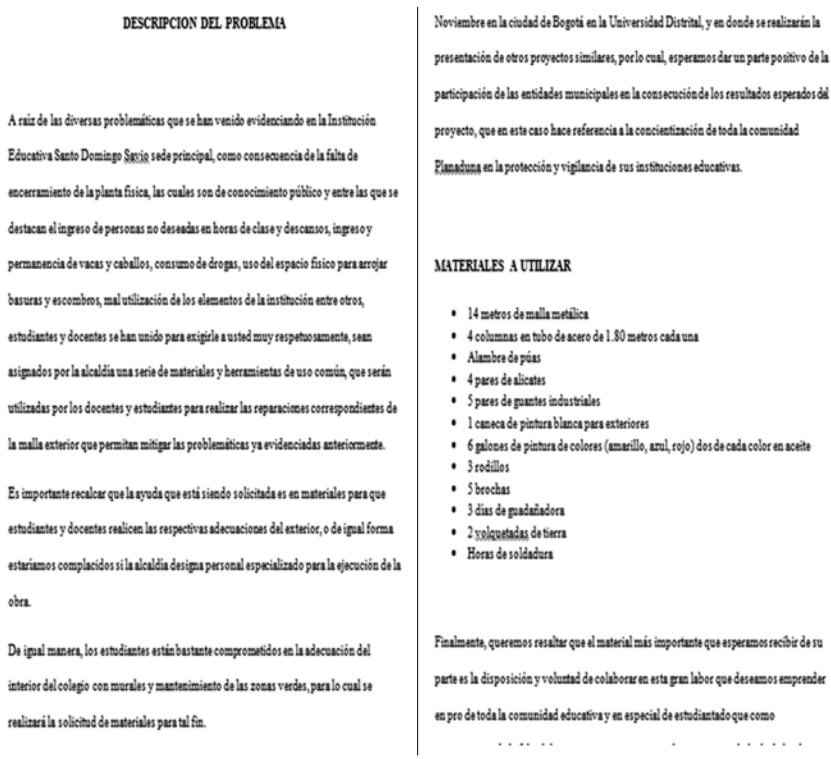
Table 3. Curricular unit

Thematic Focus	week	Lesson tittles	Communicative competence	Skill/Sub-skill	Resources	Evaluation
The environment	1-2	**Environmental problems** - Erosion - Deforestation - Carbon dioxide emissions - Air pollution - Waste management	- Expressing rejection/opinions/ regret - Describing places	**- Reading** Predicting, skimming **- Speaking** Responding to visual clues, problem solving **- Writing** Describing a picture **- Listening** Dictation	- Videos - Related reading - Paper and pen - Images	- Posters
	Procedure: During the first 20 minutes, students will see a video about the main environmental problems in Colombia. Later, students will go around the school and they will map the environmental issues of its surroundings. After that, students will use those pictures to make a brief description about their findings and in groups they will set an action plan to counteract each issue. At the end of the first two weeks, they should present their proposals to their partners and socialize them in other classrooms.					

In this vein, the topics chosen by students were used as a starting point to define the activities students´ need to follow in order to develop the different language skills. Finally, the use of the communicative approach and the set of this layered syllabus, which included students' preferences and expectations, allowed students to be more confident within the classroom, to take a more participatory role in different aspects of their daily educational process, and to enhance their performance in their learning process, which might turn into better results regarding their acquisition of a foreign language.

A second aspect is related to students' taking actions. After having focused on one of the issues that were strongly affecting their community, in this case the waste disposal, students began to take actions inside the school by themselves. As a result, one of the first activities proposed by students was to carry out some cleanup days. Before, some students were chosen to be the leaders of that activity and those leaders assigned specific roles to each member of the class. For instance, some groups of students were in charge of organizing groups of people to do the cleaning in a specific area of the school. Other activities included garbage collection, the washing of reservoir tanks, the embellishment of green zones, and the washing and cleaning of walls and floors. In addition, another group of students sent letters to the mayor in which they demanded him to allocate the resources required to enclose the school facilities due to the school's fences were broken and there were security and health problems that affected the normal activities of the institution as it is shown in *Figure 4*.

Unfortunately, they did not get any written response to their request, despite they asked for it many times. A final group of students went around the school and they were in charge of going door-by-door to explain to the surrounding community how their inadequate waste disposal was affecting their school facilities and their health. For us, it was exciting to see the level of engagement that most of the students showed during the development of the different tasks and how they were internalizing some of the premises of Community-Based Pedagogies to build a certain grade of sense of community as shown in *Figure 5*.



DESCRIPCION DEL PROBLEMA

A raíz de las diversas problemáticas que se han venido evidenciando en la Institución Educativa Santo Domingo Savio sede principal, como consecuencia de la falta de encerramiento de la planta física, las cuales son de conocimiento público y entre las que se destacan el ingreso de personas no deseadas en horas de clase y descansos, ingreso y permanencia de vacas y caballos, consumo de drogas, uso del espacio físico para arrojar basuras y escombros, mal utilización de los elementos de la institución entre otros, estudiantes y docentes se han unido para exigirle a usted muy respetuosamente, sean asignados por la alcaldía una serie de materiales y herramientas de uso común, que serán utilizadas por los docentes y estudiantes para realizar las reparaciones correspondientes de la malla exterior que permitan mitigar las problemáticas ya evidenciadas anteriormente.

Es importante recalcar que la ayuda que está siendo solicitada es en materiales para que estudiantes y docentes realicen las respectivas adecuaciones del exterior, o de igual forma estaríamos complacidos si la alcaldía designa personal especializado para la ejecución de la obra.

De igual manera, los estudiantes están bastante comprometidos en la adecuación del interior del colegio con murales y mantenimiento de las zonas verdes, para lo cual se realizará la solicitud de materiales para tal fin.

Noviembre en la ciudad de Bogotá en la Universidad Distrital, y en donde se realizarán la presentación de otros proyectos similares, por lo cual, esperamos dar un parte positivo de la participación de las entidades municipales en la consecución de los resultados esperados del proyecto, que en este caso hace referencia a la concientización de toda la comunidad Planaduna en la protección y vigilancia de sus instituciones educativas.

MATERIALES A UTILIZAR

- 14 metros de malla metálica
- 4 columnas en tubo de acero de 1.80 metros cada una
- Alambre de púas
- 4 pares de alicates
- 5 pares de guantes industriales
- 1 caneca de pintura blanca para exteriores
- 6 galones de pintura de colores (amarillo, azul, rojo) dos de cada color en aceite
- 3 rodillos
- 5 brochas
- 3 días de guadañadora
- 2 volquetadas de tierra
- Horas de soldadura

Finalmente, queremos resaltar que el material más importante que esperamos recibir de su parte es la disposición y voluntad de colaborar en esta gran labor que deseamos emprender en pro de toda la comunidad educativa y en especial de estudiantado que como

Figure 4. Proposal sent to Planadas Mayor

Figure 5. Students' mapping their community

A final aspect to be analyzed is related to students' language improvement. Accordingly, through the development of different artifacts and the use of the language in different scenarios, such as presentations, speeches, and controlled practices, we could notice that the level of effectiveness of implementing negotiated syllabus through community based projects was beyond the expected results due to the fact that most of the students showed a notorious improvement in the use of English to communicate ideas and also to relate that language in a meaningful way in the sense that it was connected to their realities and their community. Community Based Pedagogy and Negotiated curriculum also served us as mediators for taking actions to solve a community problem and at the same time to strengthen the use of English to communicate with others instead of seeing it as an isolated subject as shown in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6. Students presentations about environmental concerns to the whole school.

Conclusions

Firstly, we have noticed the importance to consider the students´ voice at any moment of their learning process, starting from the syllabus and the planning of activities as well. As they become direct participants of their educational process, they need to be directly involved in the decision making, due to the fact that their opinions and beliefs are crucial in the construction of meaningful learning of English as a foreign language and consequently contribute to the improvement in classroom environment and their achievements in the class. In this specific case, we could notice in our students that involving them in the decision-making regarding their learning process, to the point they became more participative and engaged towards the English class.

Secondly, the proposal designing is a cumbersome and a time-consuming process that requires to consider many of the aspects of the curriculum development and to predict its possible outcomes. Nevertheless, it has to be done because it surely helps not only to teachers, but also to students to be more aware of the importance of considering their conceptions, thoughts, beliefs, expectations and experiences, in order to enhance the classroom interactions, classroom environment, and finally the students' performance in class.

Thirdly, we believe there is a quite important relationship between the theory and the practice in terms of students' needs, students' inclusion, negotiated syllabus, evaluation, student-centered classroom, new conception of learners and teacher, among others. As a result, this theory was used as the base of the proposal and a point of departure for the design of new tools, which includes students' expectations and desires, in other words, a syllabus for inclusiveness.

Finally, the implementation of a curricular unit based on the communicative approach that included students' preferences and expectations, allowed students to improve their confidence in using English to communicate ideas due to the fact that they used the language for real purposes, also their participation in their learning process increased in the way that they were more engaged with every activity proposed in the curricular unit, and finally, they obtained better results regarding their language use, fluency and mistakes awareness.

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Children's Cultural Identity Formation: Experiences in a Dual Language Program[1]

Formación de la Identidad Cultural de los Niños: Experiencias en un Programa de Lenguaje Dual

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Abstract

The role of cultural identity in bilingual programs has barely been discussed in regard to second language acquisition (SLA). This research study focuses on providing relevant information that would help in providing more information about the experiences that an elementary student has during the second language learning process in a bilingual program within a multicultural context. This qualitative study took place in a Dual Language Program in a public elementary school in Northern Virginia, USA. A total of 17 students were immersed in a 50:50 program, that is, 50% of the classes were in English and the other 50% in Spanish. The information was collected using in person interviews, focus group sessions, participants' artifacts, and field observations. The experiences that emerged as contributors to children's cultural identity formation include receiving others' influence, living situations as determiners of languages switch, and using two languages as a key aspect in self-esteem improvement.

Keywords: identity; acculturation; bilingual education; dual language program; second language; elemental education; childhood

Resumen

El papel de la identidad cultural en programas bilingües ha sido escasamente discutido, en relación con la adquisición de una segunda lengua. Esta investigación se enfoca en dar información relevante que ayuda a tener un mejor conocimiento sobre las experiencias que un estudiante de educación elemental tiene durante el proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua en un programa bilingüe, dentro de un contexto multicultural. Este

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estudio cualitativo tuvo lugar en colegio elemental público en Virginia del Norte, USA., en el que 17 estudiantes estaban inmersos en un programa 50:50, es decir, 50% de las clases eran en inglés y el otro 50%, en español. La información fue recolectada a través de entrevistas personales, sesiones de grupo focal y observaciones de participantes y de campo. El recibo de la influencia de otros, la vivencia de situaciones como determinantes del cambio de lengua y el uso de dos lenguas, como factor importante en el mejoramiento de la autoestima, fueron las experiencias que surgieron como contribuciones a la formación de la identidad cultural de los niños.

Palabras clave: identidad; aculturación; educación bilingüe; programa de lenguaje dual; segunda lengua; educación elemental; infancia

Resumo

O papel da identidade cultural em programas bilíngues tem sido escassamente discutido, em relação com a aquisição de uma segunda língua. Esta pesquisa se enfoca em dar informação relevante que ajuda a ter um melhor conhecimento sobre as experiências que um estudante de educação elementar tem durante o processo de aprendizagem de uma segunda língua em um programa bilíngue, dentro de um contexto multicultural. Este estudo qualitativo teve lugar em colégio fundamental público em Virgínia do Norte, USA., no qual 17 estudantes estavam imersos em um programa 50:50, melhor dito, 50% das aulas eram em inglês e o outro 50%, em espanhol. A informação foi coletada através de entrevistas pessoais, sessões de grupo focal e observações de participantes e de campo. O recebimento da influência de outros, a vivência de situações como determinantes da mudança de língua e o uso de duas línguas, como fator importante no melhoramento da autoestima, foram as experiências que surgiram como contribuições à formação da identidade cultural das crianças.

Palavras chave: identidade; aculturação; educação bilíngue; programa de linguagem dual; segunda língua; educação elementar; infância

Introduction

Learning one or more languages, other than one's native language, is an important issue in the globalized world we live in today. The U.S.A., though a global power, is not the exception, especially if we take into account that this country is composed of a variety of people who belong to a diversity of cultures (Silbernagel, 2015). In this country, it is a well established fact that people are likely to have more cultural, social, and economic opportunities when they acquire a second language. According to Welsh Language Board (1999), the acquisition of a second language enhances children's communication, as well as promotes bilingualism and bi-literacy. In addition, it helps learners recognize the diversity of other cultures, and it is economically beneficial for learners.

Milambiling (2011) referred to the fact that, nowadays, there is greater opportunity to be in contact with different languages, groups, and cultures. Nonetheless, speaking two or more languages can make the difference on where a person lives, as well as define their educational and career choices. Additionally, Rhodes and Pufahl (2009) reinforced Milambiling's position in saying that "Providing second language experiences and knowledge about other cultures is key to any country's ability to remain competitive and increasingly recognized as critical to economic success, national security, and international relations" (as cited by Soderman, 2010, p. 55). Consequently, different school districts around the country have developed Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs in response to an increase in diversity among their population. The idea behind these programs is to develop bilingual proficiency for both language minority and majority students in the same setting. Furthermore, these programs promote a positive attitude toward languages and diverse cultures. This particular form of TWI is a Dual Language Program (DLP), in which both native English speakers and native speakers of a partner language are integrated to develop bilingualism and bi-literacy in English and another language. Both the L1 and L2 are taught together in an effort to develop full bilingualism and bi-literacy for both groups. According to Potowski (2007), Dual Immersion Programs look to promote not just the development of two languages, but also positive cross-cultural attitudes. In addition to the previous aspects, Potowski (2004) added that another goal of these kinds of programs is to develop students' self-esteem.

For the following study, the focus is less on the cognitive process of second language acquisition in children who attend a DLP, but more about the connection between culture and identity formation among younger learners. Moreover, I seek to reflect on young learners' cultural experiences and their attitudes toward the complex world in which they live in. The objective of this study will be to describe these experiences, which contribute to the children's cultural identity formation, while participating in a Dual Language Program.

Krashen (2004, as cited in Mercuri, 2008) indicated that studies about DLP were limited, but because of their design and methodology they can be considered useful. The current study may be added to this field since its goal is to help support the benefits that bilingual, cross-cultural programs can provide. Mercuri, who talks about "Capital Social", explained how cultural heritage can be transformed into social resources, and it can be included in the educative system (Mercuri, 2008, p. 92).

Theoretical Framework

Bilingual Education

According to Cohen (1975), bilingual education is the use and instruction of two languages in part or all of the school curriculum. It is also acknowledged that bilingual education includes the concept of bicultural education because language cannot be separated from culture. As Hammers and Blanc (1995) stated, language interacts with culture in defined ways, such as being the transmitter and tool used for internalization of culture by the individual.

According to the National Association for Bilingual Education, NABE, an American advocacy group, bilingual education has different goals, such as English instruction, promoting academic achievement, acculturation of immigrants, support for heritage language and culture, and the opportunity for English speakers to acquire a second language. In conformity with this, the U.S. Congress defined the term "bilingual education program" as an instructional program in P.L. 95-561, which is also known as the Bilingual Act. These types of programs are designed for children who have limited English proficiency, in which the instruction, study of, and extent of that language depend on the number of years the program is applicable. The objective is for the child to progressively acquire the desired competence in English through the educational system (Malarz, 2015).

According to Mercuri (2008) English Immersion, English as a Second Language, Transitional Bilingual, Late Exit Programs, and Dual Language Programs or Two-Way Bilingual Programs are models of programs that can be considered as bilingual education programs. She explained that each one of the programs establishes a different approach to the concept of bilingualism. In addition, these models share common goals like to achieve challenging academic skills and adequate knowledge depending on the child's age, as well to understand and value cross cultural differences (Mercuri, 2008, p. 89).

Dual Language Programs, DLP

DLP, also known as TWI programs, instruct native English speakers and native speakers of another language to develop academic proficiency in both languages beginning in kindergarten for a minimum of six years. According to Genesee (1999), TWI Programs aim at bilingual proficiency, high academic achievement, and cross-cultural understanding among participating students. Two-way implies that each native speaker can be a model for the native speaker of the other language. In other words, learners become peer teachers and language models for one another.

Based on Howard and Sugarman (2007), enrichment 90-10 and 50-50 are the two basic models in dual language education. The variation between these programs is the time of instruction for each language, as well as the literacy instruction used for the 90-10 model. The 50-50 model has a balance between L1 and second language (hereinafter L2) in academic content areas, which means that 50% of instruction is taught in the target (partner language) or minority language and the other 50% in the majority language. In the 90-10 model, students are immersed 90% of their school day in the L2.

Moreover, these dual language experiences have helped students became comfortable with speaking the second language and interacting with members from other ethnographic groups. In relation to this, Ruiz (1984) declared that these kinds of programs have helped create cross-cultural school communities and have eased the pressure between diverse language groups. In view of this, TWI Programs have also built cultural fellowship amongst all participants, such as children, parents, teachers, and administrators. Similarly, bilingual programs have recognized that acquiring a language involves learning the culture that is expressed through the language. Generally speaking, a DLP also values children's cultural and diverse characteristics and encourages them to maintain their native language, which reinforces their cultural identity.

Identity and Cultural Identity

To link the terms of identity and cultural identity*,* it may be relevant to consider Monzo and Rueda (2009) and Nieto (2010), presented by Mercuri (2014), because they explain that culture goes beyond external aspects of a person's life, rather it moves toward those intangible aspects, such as religious beliefs, the nature of language, and the values that shape the way a person thinks, behaves, and views the world.

Nieto presented seven key characteristics for culture. One of them is that culture is learned through families and communities. Nieto highlighted the fact that bilingual/bicultural education is an example of the intent of communities and individuals to maintain their language and traditions alive. This is done

by means of a curriculum that permeates students' culture and language and fosters intercultural tolerance (as cited in Mercuri, 2014).

There is a relationship between individual identity and language use. Certainly, the daily use of the language represents a particular identity. The role that language plays in the formation and expression of identity is without a doubt an influential one. Language allows for flexibility between race and ethnicity in every society, where individuals are able to consciously or unconsciously express different identities by the linguistic choices they make.

Moreover, when individuals become aware of their own culture, learning about other people's cultures may seem less difficult. Recognizing that everyone has unique traditions, values, and beliefs that are important to them (ethnic identity, language, religion and formal/informal community, neighborhood, and family connections) helps us see how we are connected, build trust, and foster stronger relationships. Certainly, ethnic heritage instruction is something that teachers should promote. By doing so, educators support their students during the acquisition of a second language; it provides learners with a transcendental support for their learning process, their academic development, and their social skills.

Acculturation

Based on Redfield, Lenton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation is viewed as a process that happens when two autonomous groups are in direct contact with one another, which results in changes within the original culture of either or both cultures. Miranda and Umhoefer (1998, p. 159) conceptualized biculturalism as being in the "intermediate level of acculturation". Being at the intermediate level may be considered as processing a balance between one's cultural values and those of the host culture.

Generally, acculturation is a cultural learning process where individuals are exposed to new cultures. Usually this occurs when one culture comes into contact with another culture, and these groups interact or "acculturate" to each other mainly in the context of immigration. However, the true meaning of acculturation is more complex than just the adoption of norms from the majority group. With this in mind, this research study considers acculturation as a process of adaptation, which is dynamic and multidimensional, that occurs when different cultures converge in contact. That process involves different degrees and instances of culture learning and maintenance that depend on factors like the individual, group, or environment (Balls, Marín and Chun, 2010).

So, essentially this is a continuous and dynamic process. It is affected by the personal and social experiences of the individual. However, when someone

has been exposed to two or more cultures, changes take place. Generally, there are changes in behavior, which include changes in speech, food preferences, clothing styles, and identity.

Furthermore, according to Berry (2003), there are also emotional reactions, such as anxiety, depression, or happiness. In addition, there are individual attitudes and orientations toward the culture of origin and the other group pertaining to the new culture. As a result, individuals create either a positive or negative response to their home culture, or their heritage culture. Additionally, the individual could also have a positive or negative response to the new culture.

Bearing in mind the focus of this study, it is important to highlight that Mercuri (2008) said that students in a DLP may learn languages, as well as cultures, according to each one of the linguistic groups they have the chance to share with. This is because apart from sharing the language, students are also sharing life experiences. Therefore, the goal is that each student takes advantage of the cultural capital that each person brings to the classroom.

Methodology

This study took place in a Spanish/English Dual Language Elementary school in Northern Virginia. The DLP was 50-50, which means that 50% of classes were in English and the other 50% in Spanish. The participants, who were the focus of this study, were randomly selected under the following criteria. First, the sample size needed to be small enough to carry out the study with the available resources and time. Second, the linguistically and culturally diverse population should be representative of the sample. Finally, the prospective participants could be approachable during the research. After identifying the characteristics of the target population, a random sample process was organized, which resulted in a sample of 17 students. Their ages ranged from 5 to 11 years old. The participants' names were changed bearing in mind ethical considerations. This study was developed during a year starting in March 2013, when permission from the school's principal was given.

Teaching in the target languages took place for 7.5 hours per day. Students learned crucial subjects entirely in Spanish like Language and Math. Later in the day, they switched and learned only in English. In some cases, they had never even heard Spanish spoken before. However, the students received support from other instructional professionals, volunteers, or even parents, who came a few times a week and helped students during the development of the activities. This last aspect is supported by Lang et al. (2009), who argued that efforts to join immigrant parents in all of the processes carried out in U.S. schools would break down cultural barriers and create opportunities for all.

For this case study, the qualitative paradigm was the key design used to link the research questions to the methodological approaches. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its matter. That means that qualitative researchers study things as they are and try to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It is an unfolding of different interpretations that evolves throughout the whole process and helps the researcher to obtain knowledge from the point of view of those who participate. Indeed, utilizing a qualitative method helps researchers become familiar with the way participants interpret their reality. In the same way, for Bogdan and Biklen (2007), a case study is "a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event" (p. 196). This research method helps to conduct a meaningful analysis of a particular place, group, or phenomenon. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to understand why individuals do certain things, what motivates them, and how they explain what they were doing.

The main information for this research was collected using in-person interviews, focus group sessions, participant observations, and field observations. Additionally, surveys, questionnaires, school documents, and students' work samples were used to gather relevant information. The purpose of collecting data was to obtain different sources in order to understand the participant's perspectives according to the main focus of the study.

The data collection instruments mentioned above were methodologically applied during different moments of the research implementation. The reason for obtaining data through these instruments was so that the researcher could ask open-ended questions. In doing so, the researcher was able to look at all of the possible ways that the participants used the targeted languages to relate to their own cultural identity.

Instructional Design

The study began with short visits to the classroom where the participants were located in order to develop a sense of familiarity between them and the researcher. This helped the children become more relaxed when having another adult in the classroom different from their main teacher. The 17 students answered questionnaires and surveys related to general information, language use, and language attitudes. These were followed up by individual meetings and group conversations. In addition, the participants' parents also collaborated by completing two surveys (see Appendix 1) and a questionnaire.

Participant observations were completed in the Spanish and English classrooms. Students were also observed during some classes like Science,

Art, Music, Physical Education. Also, the participants were observed in places other than their classroom, such as the library, cafeteria, and playground. In total, there were two face-to-face interviews with each case participant. One was conducted at the beginning of the study, while the other was conducted at the end of the study. The interview questions were related to family background, language use, likes and dislikes, and other cultural aspects. It was also important to have open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to provide more information. Digital audio files for each of the students' interview were recorded.

Data Analysis

For this study, Grounded Theory was the most accurate approach in analyzing the data. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008), this theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomena it represents. In fact, Grounded Theory aims at being inductive, which means that the only idea is to generate, or discover theory. Three stages of data analysis are involved in Grounded Theory: open-coding, axial, and selective. Open coding is a procedure used to develop categories of information. Axial coding refers to the interconnections of the categories, and selective coding relates to identifying particular categories or codes that form some kind of core, or essential concept, which can elucidate many aspects of the situation that the researcher is looking at.

Close attention was paid to each transcript in order to develop a better understanding about each participant. Then, the researcher began the stage of open coding, which is the procedure of developing categories of information. It implies studying the data collected with a more analytical point of view, so the researcher highlighted any statement that had a relationship to the broad categories and differences within each code (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Later on, the researcher started to create other sub-categories using interconnections among the categories that the researcher had already named. This process allowed the researcher to discover relevant information, although there were certain issues that required further consideration. There was a consistent comparison between the data, categories, and theory, in which relevant information related to each other within the same data. It was a process of seeking the instances that represented the categories established by the researcher. Additionally, the researcher continued to look for new information until no further insight was provide for a specific category. Finally, the researcher selected the codes, which were necessary in constructing the explanations.

Findings and Discussion

Since the main concern of this study was to discover which of the participants' experiences contributed to cultural identity formation while participating in a DLP, and after having developed the process of analysis explained formerly, the researcher concluded that those experiences can be clarified in the following categories:

Receiving others' influence

Each participant shared very similar points of view about his/her dual language experience, as well as similar childhood patterns. However, each participant's contribution has a unique print that reveals their particular personalities. The information that they shared portrayed fundamental aspects of their lives, such as family structure, preferences, and culture like ethnicity, language (s), beliefs, values, and family traditions. Focus group sessions provided contexts for observing the participants' active engagement with their experiences as dual language learners, and the interviews were very helpful in constructing the descriptions of their cultural lives within and beyond the school. This was complemented by the questionnaires (see Appendix 2). Each one of the participants performed both cultural and social roles throughout their participation in a DLP. As they engaged with all of the different activities throughout the day, each child showed their individual preferences and life through their own cultural world.

Within this first category, a subcategory emerged that showed how the participants were aware of who they are as people, as well as how others have influenced them.

Me, my family, and my community. Bearing in mind the main concern of this study, it is important to review the way cultural identity is defined within the literature review. Through this definition and after the collection of data for this study, the researcher determined that the cultural identity formation of children is connected to the different choices children make in regard to their behaviors, preferences, and social and cultural roles. Cultural identity, according to Deng (2005), "answer the questions of 'Who am I?', 'Where are we going?' and 'What do we Have?'" (pp 39-41). Likewise, Norton and Toohey (2002) suggested that cultural identity answers questions that are linked to who the person is, how the person relates to the social world, and under what conditions the person speaks. On the contrary, Meca, Sabet, Farrelly, Benitez, Schwartz, Gonzales-Backen, Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Zamboanga, Baezconde-Garbanati, Picariello, Des Rosiers, Soto, Pattarroyo, Villamar, and Lizzi, (2017), based on different authors, such as Syed and Juang (2014) and

Waterman (1999), clearly differentiated between personal identity and cultural identity. They explained that personal identity was related to the person by himself or herself, while cultural identity referred to the way individuals defined themselves in relation to the cultural groups they belonged to (p. 349).

The focus group sessions offered an opportunity to learn about the children's perceptions regarding their experience with dual language participation (see Appendix 3). It also allowed the researcher to see some of the different roles and behaviors that participants adopted when they worked on concepts related to culture. The participants expressed their cultural preferences through interviews and the creation of artifacts. They described themselves in terms of their general attributes, family structure, and experiences as dual language learners. The learners' daily context influenced their perceptions about language and culture. Children care about those who are very important to them, primarily their parents, close relatives, and even friends. They see the people who are part of their world as family and community members. Based on the concept of "Capital Social", provided by Mercuri (2008), there are different positive relationships that students share with other people at school, but at the same time, there are support relationships at home. That is why both contexts, school and home, may influence the perception of language and culture.

Every participant within the DLP is an active contributor to the system itself. From that perspective, the term "social role" was considered as a type of influence that other people may have on a participant's behavior. Indeed, human beings live each experience in a particular way and behave differently depending on the social role s/he plays at that moment. Social roles involve being a daughter, son, student, friend, relative, or teacher. In fact, each role has an important connection with the different settings where the participants live. Each person takes on different roles during the day, and s/he shift between them daily. According to Chen (2015), as bilinguals acquire a language in different contexts, the use of a specific language evokes its associated attitudes and behaviors (2015, p. 7). The child cannot be influenced just by the role s/he plays in a specific moment, but also by the language s/he uses at a specific time.

Thanks to the time the researcher spent with the students during the collection of data, she was able to become more aware of the influence family background has on the way children experience their participation in the DLP. This notion is represented in the following situation, where Lauren, who speaks Spanish fluently, emphasized the following:

> *Lauren: I am very comfortable speaking in Spanish. My dad always says to me "Honey, you are doing great with your Spanish".*

In the previous example, it was very interesting to see the parents' interest in their children learning and reinforcing another language other than English. This aspect was opposite to the one found by Mercuri (2014), in which she explained how parents understood the value of English in the American society. Because of this, they pushed their children to learn that language and forget the native one. This was based on the notion that doing so would provide their children with better possibilities and less discrimination.

Based on Adelman and Lynn (2007), there is ample evidence that parents' satisfaction does not only come from their children's academic environment, it also comes from the way their children are challenged by this kind of education. However, an important issue to bear in mind is how those challenges expand into children's identity formation.

As this first category refers to others' influence, the next sample shows a different type of influence. Based on one of the observations, the researcher noticed that Joseph always used formal Spanish and English. He also had a well-developed ability to switch from English to Spanish, or vice versa. In one interview, he said:

> *Joseph: Sometimes my dad says that he is gonna give me 10 bucks if I help him with Spanish. So, one day my dad forgot what "table" was in Spanish and he is like "Table for two please." The waitress did not hear, so then he said, "Joseph, I give you a ten-dollar bill and you just tell me How do I say 'table' please?" And I am like "Money first please."*
>
> *Teacher: Did he give you the money? Did he?*
>
> *Joseph: Oh, yeah.*

Bearing in mind the construct of investment provided by Norton (2000), who is referenced by Potowski (2004), learners invest in a language when they feel they will receive symbolic and material resources. Joseph received double profits. First, he gained the feeling of high self-esteem because of his ability to speak an additional language, and the second was the monetary gain.

The following category emerged after having analyzed how children switch the language they speak depending on the situation s/he was facing.

Living situations as determiners of language switch

During the one-on-one interviews, different topics were addressed. Some of the conversations were related to the use of Spanish or English, the things children found good about speaking two languages, and mixing or switching languages. Based on Barón Ávila (2010), code switching happens when a

person alternates between two languages during a discourse. According to Potowski (2004), language selection in the classroom is part of the students' identity performances. Nevertheless, these performances cannot be limited to the school environment. In addition, Trechter and Bucholtz (as cited in Mercuri, 2014) argued that the use of a specific language in a determined context influences the development of cultural identity.

A sample for this case is the following:

Teacher: Has it ever happened to you that you mix the languages?

Sean: Ahh. One time I was playing piano because I am learning piano lessons, and I asked something to my grandpa, and then I talked to him in English "this is my favorite piano piece..."or something like that I said, and he gave me this look like "what are you saying???" because he doesn't know English, and I said "Oh, I am sorry. I am sorry. I meant to say 'Este es mi favorito'", and I immediately played the piano. Later on, I asked my Dad how to say "Piano Piece" in Spanish and he told me " pieza de piano". Then, I learned a new word. (big smile)

Based on the previous episode between Sean and his father, it is noticeable that the child had the opportunity to learn new words, in this case *pieza de piano.* According to Soderman (2010), vocabulary building in each one of the languages that the child is learning is extremely important. Nevertheless, this author referred to how teachers receive additional training in effective strategies to teach vocabulary. In this case of Sean, the teaching came from Sean's father, who also played an important role in the language learning process.

In addition, the last sample is also supported by Barón Ávila (2010), who indicated that language switching occurs because of the social and cultural contexts where students are immersed in. In some cases, the context does not allow children to practice or interact frequently in English. Sean's context of immersion at that moment did not involve English as the way of communication. Therefore, language switching was not an option, it was a process that Sean needed to undergo if he wanted his grandfather to understand him.

After stating the previous examples, it is important to highlight that mixing languages, for some children, is related to the child's ability to infer if the person speaks two languages or not. Also, once the child has been able to recognize which language to speak and with whom, s/he will do two things: challenge him/her to speak more of that language or avoid communication with people who speak that language. Therefore, it is very important to recognize that students may have family members who speak other languages and who may motivate the child to speak their native language more. It is very important that children can communicate in their parents' native language

because if they don't, they may not value their parent's heritage. Consequently, they may not grow up identifying themselves with their parents' heritage. If the language is not part of their lives, the children will forget a piece of who they are. The former idea is based on the definition on language provided by Hillard (1983), "…since language is always used within a cultural context, it cannot be separated from cultural identity" (as cited in Silbernagel, 2015).

Dual language learners also create a comfort zone through their choice of language. They use their creativity in terms of communication. As soon as they build better language skills, they start to use the language in certain situations. For example, they might use a particular language if they think the receptor would like to hear them using that language. When children have the confidence to switch languages, they are simultaneously learning from themselves. Dual language learners also switch languages with different intentions. The following example was recognized during this study due to their relation to cultural identity formation among dual language learners.

Amy: My little brother estaba en la guatita de mami (guata: Chilean word for 'belly') (My little brother was in my mom's belly).

What is represented in the previous example is clearly supported by Chen (2015), who explained that the integration of one language into another presupposes the use of "loanwords". In this concrete case, Amy not only switched from English to Spanish, but she also used a specific Chilean word in the conversation. This example showed how bilinguals alternate emotions, behaviors, and cognition, which are components of personality traits (Chen, 2015).

Based on Grosjean (2008), as cited by Bakić and Škifić (2017), people who are bilingual can use one language and switch the other language off in special situations. In their article, they discussed the connection between bilingualism and biculturalism and how a person may deactivate one language, but they cannot do the same with culture.

Potowski (2004) argued that the language students select in the classroom must be seen as part of their identity performances. However, those performances cannot be limited to the class because students are people who want to show who they are in different places. This is especially true when they want to share their identities with those who are closer to them, such as their family members at home. Mercuri (2014) also referred to Gee's position (2008) about the two kinds of discourses that a person may acquire, the primary and the secondary one. The secondary discourse is the one acquired by the person at school. The first discourse, which is part of this study, is the primary discourse. It is the cultural base of the language that the person speaks every day and provides him/her a sense of self. According to Gee, the first discourse needs to be valued at school in order to avoid affecting identity development.

Finally, knowing more than one language may influence the way a child is or behaves, such as his or her personal traits. For this study, self-esteem was considered and analyzed as follows.

Using two languages as a key aspect in self-esteem improvement

One of the advantages that learning a second language offers is an improvement in the person's self-esteem and sense of self. In fact, knowing more than one language supports children by making them more at ease in different environments. In the following excerpts, the participants demonstrated how they felt speaking two languages. The first excerpt was provided by Amy, who felt very proud of herself for speaking two languages. She expressed that her parents only speak one language, "Español".

> *Amy: En la escuela yo hablo Inglés y Español. En el parque hablo Español a la Sra. "x" (Spanish speaker) y a mis amigos yo hablo inglés, también Español. Hay niños que no saben Español, así como "x" (classmate) tú sabes. Yo se que tú sabes. [In school I speak English and Spanish. At the park, I speak Spanish with Mrs. "x" (Spanish speaker) and with my friends I speak English, also Spanish. There are kids that don't know Spanish, like "x" (classmate) you know. I know that you know].*

However, there are times when some learners do not feel very confident at all when talking in other language. This was the case in following excerpt where Nina was not confident talking in Spanish.

> *Nina: My parents are from Mongolia and all of my grandparents live in Mongolia…and I …I…was born in America, and I've been in New York and Mongolia. I mostly speak English, I know a little bit of Spanish and some Mongolian…I know how to say "hola" in Mongolian. Ahhh...*

Nina had difficulty expressing her thoughts in Spanish. When the researcher asked her which language she was used to speaking most of the time in the school cafeteria or playground, she replied "English". As a matter of fact, the researcher was able to recognize that Nina does not participate at all in Spanish class. She received extra help to support her Spanish speaking skills.

There are circumstances that make this situation more difficult, such as communication with family members. To be bilingual does not mean that the competence in both languages must be the same. Chen (2015) indicated that some bilinguals who are not fluent in the other language may feel "inhibited" because of the restricted ability to express themselves. As a consequence, this affects the way they express their personalities. This point suggests that the expression of personality traits is highly influenced by the language that is dominated by the bilingual person.

After working with the participants and having the chance to see them construct their own ideas of culture, I noticed how they, little by little, became engaged in the constant process of seeking and refining their first ideas of culture. By the last focus group session, the participants condensed all of the information, which was explored during the study in order to make the first recognition of the aspects they considered relevant to their cultural identity. During this period of the study, the attention was focused on observing them more as individuals, as well as part of a particular group within a multicultural society.

Conclusions

This research study explored children's lived experiences in a multicultural context while participating in a DLP. Through this study, the researcher was able to confirm that the participation in a DLP, as well as living in a multicultural context, may be an experience that contributes to children's cultural identity formation. Their context and personal expressions as members of a society and as individuals aids in the formation of cultural identity.

The participants shared different experiences in regard to their individuality and as members of a group. The children shaped their cultural identity by finding ways to get to know who they are and identify what makes them different from others in their immense cultural context.

Culture is something relevant and important for every child, and it has an important place in their lives. Culture helps them bond with their families, and it also helps them value their uniqueness and individuality through a sense of pride. This enriching experience brings something special to their lives. The participants of this study switched their cultural language as a means of understanding their world and expressed their feelings and experiences as dual language learners while sharing who they are.

Cultural identity of children is in constant transformation. It is smooth, flexible, and solidified through their own reflections about their past experiences. It represents opportunities, as well as complex situations and cultural and social roles that relate to different behaviors, which combine with their unique identity. It is a fact that the cultural identity of children is still in progress. Furthermore, children are incredibly active when they feel valued and their ideas are heard. They are constantly exploring and shaping their cultural identity in school settings and beyond.

The acquisition of a second language, no matter the type of bilingual program chosen, is beneficial for individuals. In this case, it is particularly beneficial for children because they not only have the chance to become literate in a different language, but they can also recognize and value the diversity of cultures, especially the native one.

A Dual Language Program gives learners the opportunity to be native language models to others in the same classroom. In addition, DLPs allow native cultures to be shared, which results in the chance of encouraging the native language and culture. This is done while learning a second language and valuing a different culture.

When teaching a second language, it is not valid to think that it just implies the transmission of linguistic knowledge about that second language. The language, as part of the culture and a key aspect in a person's identity, plays an important role in keeping and reinforcing native languages. That is why it is important to have curriculums which embrace the cultural heritage of its students.

With this study, it was evident that the students integrated new languages (English/Spanish) with a positive attitude. They learned and interacted with new cultures, but they also maintained the native culture.

Participation in a DLP is a great opportunity for learners to acquire a second language and interact with different cultures. In addition, experiences like receiving others' influence, living situations as determiners of language switch, and using two languages as a key aspect in self-esteem can be labeled as those which contribute to children's cultural identity formation.

This research study illustrated a way to engage students in exploring and recognizing important features of their and their family's culture. This could serve as an action plan for a general curriculum or classroom setting. Again, this is just a possibility of many to recognize the importance of providing opportunities to explore culture within the classroom and to engage children in their own cultural identity formation. This includes encouraging parents and teachers to support children in this process. Sometimes, in a rush to prepare lesson plans or to accomplish the curriculum for classes, teachers forget that other aspects are valuable for their students. To conclude, this might be a fun and solid foundation where children can build their values, beliefs, and knowledge.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Parent Survey (Some questions were selected to be part of this article)

1. Is a language other than English spoken in your home?
   _____ Yes _____ No What is that language?
2. Is your child's native tongue a language other than English?
   _____ Yes _____ No What is that language?
3. What language do you speak most of the time?
4. What language does your child speak most of the time?
5. Why did you choose to enroll your child in the dual language program?
6. Has the dual language program met your expectations for your child's learning? _____ Yes _____ No
7. In what ways are you involved in your child's education at school (volunteering in class, joining him/her for lunch, etc.)?
8. Has your knowledge of different cultures increased through your child's participation in this language program?
9. Do you feel like other unique cultures are appreciated and valued at your child's school? _____ Yes _____ No

   If so, in what ways? How is it demonstrated?

Appendix 2: Students' questionnaire (Some questions were selected to be part of this article)

What language do you mainly speak at home?

What language do you mainly speak at school?

In what language do you speak most often during recess?

In what language do you speak more fluently?

What language do you speak when spending time with friends outside of school?

When spending time with your Spanish/English bilingual friends outside of school, which language do you typically use?

With whom do you use Spanish? (Bubble in all that apply)

At home, with your parents, brothers, or sisters, how often do you speak in Spanish and English?

How comfortable do you feel speaking Spanish in public?

How comfortable do you feel speaking English in public?

Appendix 3: Focus Group Session (FGS)

The purpose of developing these activities within the focus group sessions is to give the participants a space where they can explore different aspects of "culture" (language, traditions, values, and beliefs). Finally, I conclude the sessions with the topic "Cultural Identity". Through these workshops, students reflect upon culture, both individually and as a group. The children think and talk about what the word culture means to each of them. My assistance is very little. For example, I introduce the topics, such as "traditions", give some examples, use visual cards, and work as a facilitator. I ask questions related to the topic and give them the chance to provide their perceptions. These activities were designed to motivate the children to create their own ideas of culture, to recognize it, and relate with it. Students returned their worksheets during the same session or the next day of the session. The topics selected to work on the Focus Group Sessions were: All About Me, how are we alike? My Family Tree, My Winter Holiday Scrapbook, Designing My Own Flag, My Cultural Identity.

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Situated practice in CLIL: Voices from Colombian teachers[1]

Práctica situada en AICLE: voces de profesores colombianos

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to determine the factors and conditions that intervene in the implementation of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in diverse Colombian educational contexts. This study was conducted at five private schools from different cities and towns in the country (Bogotá, Chía, Tenjo, Facatativá, and Girardot). Data was collected from three sources (interviews, questionnaires, and field journals). Data analysis procedures included the use of triangulation and validation procedures through the grounded theory approach. Findings revealed that teachers still have complications understanding CLIL as an approach that goes beyond the mere usage of the target language in content. Instead, the study advocates for the inclusion of essential lifelong skills (i.e. creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) when implementing CLIL in the classroom. Results also indicated that staged lesson planning is scarce, and that teachers' practices still emphasize the scope and sequence plan provided by the textbook used in the institutions. Hence, the study supports the design and implementation of CLIL professional development programs that through scaffolding can assist teachers in viewing and situating CLIL as a dialogic pedagogical approach. Not only does the approach help teachers make use of their existing knowledge of CLIL, but also helps them materialize ways through which language and content can be integrated.

Key words: CLIL; professional development; CLIL planning,;lifelong learning; 21ST Century Skills, teacher's practice; pedagogy; language and content integration

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio exploratorio y cualitativo es el de determinar los factores y condiciones que intervienen en la implementación de AICLE (Aprendizaje Integrado de

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Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras) en diversos contextos educativos colombianos. Este estudio se condujo en cinco colegios privados de diferentes ciudades del país (Bogotá, Chía, Tenjo, Facativá y Girardot). Los datos se recolectaron de tres diferentes fuentes (entrevistas, cuestionarios y diarios de campo). El procedimiento de análisis de datos incluyó el uso de procesos de triangulación y validación a través del enfoque de teoría fundamentada. Los resultados revelaron que los profesores aun tienen problemas al entender AICLE como un enfoque que va ás allá de el solo uso del idioma objeto dentro del contenido. En cambio, el estudio propone una inclusión de las habilidades para la vida (por ejemplo: creatividad, pensamiento crítico, colaboración y comunicación) cuando se implemente AICLE en el salón de clase. Los resultados también indican que la planeación de clase gradual es escaza y que las prácticas de los profesores aun se enfocan en el plan de alcance y secuencia dado por el libro de texto usado en las instituciones. Por lo tanto, el estudio apoya el diseño e implementación de programas de desarrollo profesional en AICLE que, a través de escalonamiento, pueda auxiliar a los profesores en ver y ubicar AICLE como un enfoque dialógico pedagógico. El enfoque no solo ayuda a los maestros a hacer uso de su conocimiento existente de AICLE, sino que también les ayuda a materializar formas a través de las cuales se pueden integrar el lenguaje y el contenido

Palabras clave: AICLE; desarrollo profesional; planeación en AICLE; aprendizaje para la vida; habilidades del siglo 21; practica docente; pedagogía; integración de lengua y contenido

Resumo

O propósito deste estudo exploratório e qualitativo é o de determinar os fatores e condições que intervém na implementação de AICLE (Aprendizagem Integrada de Conteúdos e Línguas Estrangeiras) em diversos contextos educativos colombianos. Este estudo foi conduzido em cinco colégios particulares de diferentes cidades do país (Bogotá, Chía, Tenjo, Facativá e Girardot). Os dados se coletaram de três diferentes fontes (entrevistas, questionários e diários de campo). O procedimento de análise de dados incluiu o uso de processos de triangulação e validação através do enfoque de teoria fundamentada. Os resultados revelaram que os professores ainda têm problemas ao entender AICLE como um enfoque que vai mais além do simples uso do idioma objeto dentro do conteúdo. Em troca, o estudo propõe uma inclusão das habilidades para a vida (por exemplo: criatividade, pensamento crítico, colaboração e comunicação) quando se implemente AICLE na sala de aula. Os resultados também indicam que o planejamento de aula gradativo é escasso e que as práticas dos professores ainda se enfocam no plano de alcance e sequencia dado pelo livro de texto usado nas instituições. Portanto, o estudo apoia o desenho e implementação de programas de desenvolvimento profissional em AICLE que, através de escalonamento, possa auxiliar os professores em ver e situar AICLE como um enfoque dialógico pedagógico. O enfoque não somente ajuda os mestres a fazer uso do seu conhecimento existente de AICLE, senão que também ajuda a materializar formas através das quais se podem integrar a linguagem e o conteúdo

Palavras chave: AICLE; desenvolvimento profissional; planejamento em AICLE; aprendizagem para a vida; habilidades do século 21; prática docente; pedagogia; integração de língua e conteúdo.

Introduction

There is no teaching approach that can be faultlessly used in every educational context. Before launching any intervention, it is necessary to understand that pedagogical approaches are meant to be adapted according to the educational context in which one teaches and should be shaped according to target students' needs in order to gauge their learning effectively. As new educational trends emerge, every teaching and learning action needs to be well planned out to achieve success. This includes keeping the target goals in mind and the learning standards traced. For example, in Colombia by law it is mandatory that all students in schools learn English as a foreign language. According to the Colombian Ministry of Education policy (2016), the improvement of the communicative competences in English as a foreign language in all the educational fields is one of the main objectives along with the use of new means and technologies and labor competences. Hence, it is imperative to design and implement pedagogical strategies for the effective development of plans oriented to meet such goals.

Although numerous representatives converge in the educational panorama (i.e. stakeholders, teachers, directives, administratives), these parties are not necessarily informed, well prepared in the field of language teaching and learning, and/or might lack knowledge concerning the context with its pertaining needs and diversities. In Colombia, there is no specific approach stated or suggested from governmental entities to reach this objective. What is more, not all of the institutions act in a unified and uniform way to address approaches and methodologies. Most of the time the decision-making concerning the design and implementation of the language curriculum relies on teachers themselves. Some might claim that the process and responsibility of developing the target linguistic competences depends on each educational institution. Others might claim that it is entirely the say of the educational stakeholders such as the Secretaries of Education, and the Ministry itself to rule, guide, and support the process. To this point, the debate around the ones in charge of leading English language development in Colombia still remains open. It is well known that such stakeholders should strive for the provision of quality by favoring specialized instructional support and fostering infrastructure improvement. Principally, these cases emerge when the scarcity of resources (both human and physical) demands huge and timely attention.

Switching to new teaching and learning methodologies can create anxiety, lack of confidence and/or unskillfulness on the teacher's side. That teachers lack the necessary knowledge can affect pedagogical interventions as they might be reticent to understand or try out new approaches to teach. Change is always intimidating and high-risk since planning for a vibrant and diversified teaching and language scene always means investing additional time and effort.

The Colombian language teaching context has witnessed for decades the implementation of various conventional approaches. One of them is grammar-based, which according to Canale and Swain (1980), focuses purely on linguistics and the usage of grammatical forms. The majority of Colombian schools create their own curricula and choose the competences and foci that they are required to develop during the academic year. Sometimes they align with the Colombian language standards (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, hereafter) (Cambridge, 2011). In addition, most grammar-based educational institutions are provided with textbooks that suggest the topics and content to learn the language and is distributed according to the book's scope and sequence. All content topics and objectives are included there, and an initial guide is already created. However, educational resources (books, in most cases) do not always fill in the gaps of school curricula as they might lack the alignment to linguistic prospects and specific contextual elements needed to develop language practice efficiently.

Books might offer generic content for all learners, and teachers are called to pick and choose the elements that best suit their planning and practice keeping in mind that in terms of resources one size does not fit all. Most books that are used in Colombian schools do not generally fit the guidelines suggested by the Ministry of Education, as they were not designed for the Colombian context. Consequently, broken connections between what is and should be taught and what is and should be assessed appear. Last of all, in those cases in which schools do not use books, educational resources such as learning guides and lessons need to be designed or adapted. Most of the time they are generally created from scratch, posing additional burdens in terms of time and workload for the teacher.

Besides, Rodríguez-Bonces (2012) remarks how language learning approaches have influenced the way students learn by doing, and the CLIL approach is not the exception. Keeping in mind that the nature of EFL is not based on teaching language intrinsically but on drawing students for possible interactions with people from unalike contexts (Snow, 2015), CLIL offers a window to raise understanding of the world through culture, language acquisition, exchange, and situated content.

Challenges arise along the path, though. One of them concerns the need to find specialized teachers that deal with CLIL efficiently in schools either for offer or demand issues. The English teacher is generally the one in charge of dealing with specific content areas such as math, science, geography, history, etc., resulting in defective alignment of content and language goals and impeding the natural growth and development of the language curricula.

However, several reasons support the endorsement of CLIL. Mariño (2014) claims that among the main reasons for implementing CLIL is the impact of globalization and the technological advances in education. There is the need to create a means for communication to supply this gap and favor learning in context. Nevertheless, the usage of CLIL does also pose challenges. In Mariño's study, findings reveal that the teacher was neither clear about the criteria for assessing her students, nor about the reasons to evaluate their language level. This echoes the former difficulty exposed above, highlighting that not all teachers teaching content areas have appropriate preparation for such a mission, and content teachers do not necesarily focus on language skill development. This presupposes the existence of new breaches at the planning, feedback, and assessment generation instances. Among the ways to surpass these difficulties, the author mentions generating interdisciplinary connections between content and language teachers to better map curricula.

Other challenges reported by Rodríguez Bonces (2012) relate to difficult situations that teachers encounter when their students do not have good training in EFL because of limited exposure to the language. The author suggests that a possible solution is to begin a gradual implementation of CLIL only when students have had caught up with the required knowledge to understand several aspects and ideas needed for the proper growth of the learning process. As Rodríguez-Bonces (2011) states, CLIL requires a certain degree of knowledge of the language, meeting global and local standards such as CEFR and MEN respectively. This draws attention to key issues implemented in any teaching approach that makes use of new methodologies: 1. Adequate target-language competence. 2. Adequate subject knowledge. 3. Adequate materials in the target language. 4. Explicit institutional and national policies and 5. Teacher cooperation.

Numerous challenges await all the abovementioned agents involved in language development specifically for those involving CLIL. There is an urgent need to find a synchrony between educational contexts and ways to tackle their demands.

Thus, the present study attempts to illustrate accounts from five Colombian teachers from five schools that have had both opportunities and limitations for the effective usage of CLIL. The study derives from a preliminary phase in which observations *in-situ* and interviews with teachers were held. These revealed deficiencies in the ways in which they approach language teaching, their students' learning, and their practice itself. Therefore, the study was launched to inquire about the factors and conditions that might intervene in the implementation of CLIL in schools.

This study may add to the existing body of research in the analysis of CLIL implementation as it may broaden understanding concerning

deficiencies and gains in its applicability and make agents aware of the factors to be examined to achieve the expected goals in their educational contexts. The study advocates for a conscious and suitable use of CLIL, viewed as an approach that fuses theoretical and practical keystones to foster efficient and lifelong language learning development. It might be applicable to the ELT and content-language communities in Colombia and around the globe.

Theoretical Considerations

CLIL gains and horizons

CLIL has been acknowledged as an innovative approach during the past 10 years mainly because of the novelty and diversity it brought in the classroom. In CLIL, content knowledge and language knowledge are expected to be learned simultaneously (Coyle, Marsh, & Hood, 2010). It also needs content teachers who are able to cope with target language demands. However, two aspects suggest a two-fold problematic scenario involving cognition and pedagogy. This often occurs because teachers do not always know their role in language teaching and some lack strategies to teach a subject in L2 (Lo, 2014). According to Tedick and Fortune (2008), content subject teachers are not aware of language demands, and they need to know how language constructs content, and it can can be a barrier when learning subjects and theories in L2. The result of which is making students lose engagement in classes and activities which teachers created for assembling language and content.

Motivation is an important part of learning an L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1959), and CLIL studies have also drawn on this issue. Coyle (2006) has also claimed that CLIL improves learning quality and at the same time, provides students with more opportunities to put language into practice while boosting learning motivation in students and teachers. Likewise, Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra (2014) conducted a research study with 393 secondary students focusing on motivational issues. The authors claim that those learners that are not exposed to L2 all the time need classroom motivation, which is generally affected by the class environment, the program, the curriculum, and the teacher.

Babocká (2015) indicated how CLIL integrates content areas in language teaching. She used Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou's (2003) premises to highlight the connections between assessment and classroom teaching, drawing attention to learner's attitude(s) before, during, and after assessment. Furthermore, viewing assessment and evaluation were presented as a part of a more comprehensive process in which testing is only one part. The researcher found out how it helps students to keep attention in class, appropriate learning activities, and internalize content and language. The main concern though, was finding ways to assess students in CLIL classes in a practical way. Researchers

suggested a variety of resources to keep track of the process such as pictures, charts, web links, video links, etc., It was also found that the context, the school possibilities, the resources, and students' individualities affect the way the progress is made.

The latest trends in CLIL indicate an arising interest towards the use of resources, both print and digital. Authors such as López Medina (2016) and Czura (2017) report how textbooks are valuable due to the level of exposure that students have to them, and highlight their guiding role as a logical sequence of contents and skills to develop in students. Among the benefits that textbooks bring to the educational community, it is discussed that these resources have been designed by experts who (more likely) know the current regulations and standards presented by academic organizations. Thus, resources constitute an additional tool to assist teachers in keeping track of the target teaching and learning processes. However, several challenges are faced when using these materials. As reported by Czura (2017), there is a shortage of textbooks that assist content and language and in some contexts, publishers distribute translated versions of regular textbooks written in learners' first language (L1) without making any adjustment to further comply with the requirements of CLIL instructional mode. Thus, very often these translated CLIL textbooks fail to support learners' development in the subject matter in a foreign language.

On the one hand, CLIL resources are also accessed and used from the educational resources that publishing houses bring to educational institutions. On the other hand, the changes in educational policies and guidelines might affect the effectiveness in their usage given the different contexts in which these might be utilized. CLIL resources do provide general academic language (metalanguage) that is not quite easy to understand by novice teachers and learners. In addition to this, CLIL resources can also be scarce, and can be mostly addressed to a native speaker population.

The aforementioned challenges with printed resources (textbooks) might be tackled via the implementation of other additional sources such as audiovisual tools (Zhyrun, 2016). Since the textbook does not provide all the necessary elements for proficiency development, teachers are also called to gather additional resources that allow them to customize their lessons based on students' preferences and needs, while using authentic and reliable resources. However, teachers need to be cognizant that not all resources found online are suitable to their learners, so they have to prepare themselves for a proper and gradual material adaptation process.

The use of resources in the English classroom

Resources in the current era include digital and print-based means. Many educational institutions around the globe have diversified the usage of resources to support language learning. The vast offer of resources on the web and through publishing houses has demanded the acquisition of new competences both on the side of teachers and learners. Nevertheless, there still are debatable issues concerning such a panorama. On the one hand, many institutions still pririotize the use of the textbook over the use of digital support sources, and on the other, many textbooks do not fill the context, expectations, and needs of the learners. In his study, Muhsen Al Harbi (2017), revealed some feelings towards the use of textbooks. Teachers mentioned that the clarity of the textbook objectives was not treated effectively. In addition to this, the content was not helpful to apply teaching theories and practices, and the content of the textbook had no helpful tests or procedures to evaluate students' achievement effectively.

Teachers can also display drawbacks when using digital tools for the class. As Çelik and Aytin (2014) describe in their study, teachers are often seen as weak in computing technologies skills, indicating deficiencies in digital literacies. In their study, the authors applied a series of interviews with six elementary and high school teachers. Results suggested that participants felt confident with their level of skill in applying the digital resources. However, this also showed that the lack of connectivity limited teachers in taking advantage of the available resources. Teachers can feel anxious when using digital resources, and do not want to fail when using them. Therefore, it can be argued that incorporating digital resources does not mean generating success in the class. Instead, on a modest basis, it can be stated that novelty and change might be gauged using digital sources only when users have understood the rationale of use by going through sequential guidance and training stages for optimal usage.

Onofrei (2016) highlights in her study that access to new technologies for academic study and the identification of the level of training and use of new ICT resources by secondary school teachers are essential skills. Her study was conducted in secondary schools located in rural and urban areas in Romania. To identify the level of access, training and use of new ICT resources by secondary school teachers, she used a questionnaire about access and use of new ICT in education. In this questionnaire, access to technology was measured through a scale that examined both access to new ICT in school and in classroom, and the study identified activities where teachers used new ICT resources and revealed the kind of applications that they used. Results indicated that teachers used technological resources to prepare their lesson and activity but did not do it efficiently. Although there had been investments in technology into schools, teachers use new ICT at a basic level. The author claims that such situations happen because the implemented training programs place high emphasis on

the "technological aspects and offer little use of technology for teaching" (Onofrei, 2016, p. 31), focusing merely on technical usage matters, rather than on pedagogies.

Similarly, this also happens in Colombian schools, where there are classrooms that have wide access to ICT resources (i.e. learning platforms, devices, internet, etc.), but teachers do not (or cannot) take advantage of them because they lack the skills to implement them effectively. McDougald (2013) mentions how teachers are currently using methods that are not part of traditional approaches and that fulfill teachers' expectations regarding language learning usefulness, not as part of imposed beliefs from an academic institution but as level of comfort that allows them to increase their competence about ICT along with their beliefs about it. Besides, teachers report having knowledge about platforms and digital sources that help extending students' knowledge outside the classroom. They claim to have been exposed to professional development opportunities throught ICT, resulting in the improvement of their language skills because of using such technologies.

The author also highlighted that teachers are encouraged to use technology but more importantly receive training in order to be prepared for efficient technology implementation. Creating opportunities for students to practice is necessary to see if technology is an ally in the process of learning a foreign language. Ariza and Suarez (2013) pinpoint the support generated by digital tasks in which students gain linguistic awareness and understanding that language learning is a process for understanding rather than translating. However, such process is only effective when the teacher understands the pedagogical rules of technology (Cuesta Medina, 2018), which constitutes technology as a means to assist learners to achieve their goals and not the end itself. Such a development needs time to both raise understanding and awareness on the ways to attain progress and scaffolded support from those involved in the educational arena.

Professional development: A must for teachers?

Efficient professional development (PD) takes place when teachers focus on learning to be able to foster improvement in students and themselves. This mission should not only be the teachers' responsibility but also the institution in which they are affiliated. Through PD, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their difficulties, set plans to improve them, and build on their strengths to trace pathways towards success.

Whether short or long-term plans, PD needs to be effectively delivered. In the case of the CLIL classroom, teachers do not only have to work towards gaining knowledge and expertise to conduct doable implementations, but they

also have to cope with the need for "official training programs or school policy to develop content teachers' language skills" (Kewara & Prabjandee, 2018).

Several studies have introduced the importance of PD in academic environments. For example, Nicolaidis and Mattheoudakis (2008) pinpoint the long-term effectiveness of training courses for EFL teachers. Their study addresses attention to individual needs and how teachers used the resources and knowledge taught during the training course as well as the usefulness of the subjects offered. In the study, the effects that short-term courses offer to long term teaching are questioned as well as the degree of importance assigned by teachers to put into practice something new, changing the routine they experience, and broadening their perspectives by becoming students again. This type of training might produce initial steps for reflection with colleagues but hardly ever end in change in classroom practice.

Correspondingly, Zein (2016) states that the lack of knowledge and skills impact PD. He raises the concern that PD programs are not focused on teachers' needs and, in many cases, teachers were the ones reluctant to pursue their own professional growth. Conversely, PD programs that have objectives to address teachers' needs, enhance instructional practice, pedagogical knowledge, and expansion in self-efficacy. Effective PD programs have a great relationship between training contents and teachers' needs, generating optimal results, and increasing participation and active learning through inquiry-based learning modes that can positively affect practices and policies. These courses promote cooperative learning as discussion in which planning, and practice opportunities are offered. They also provide opportunities to generate feedback from different perspectives, which mulitiplies the possibilities for reflection and action.

The aforementioned insights lead us to initiate discussion on the contents to be included in professional development plans for ELT. In their study, LaFond and Dogancay-Aktuna (2009) point out that the emphasis should be on the social context and the pedagogical progress rather than the linguistic theory itself. Their focus prioritizes the pedagogical purpose mission over language teaching including sociocultural diversification and the ability to prepare teachers for different contexts. For the teacher educator, the principal role should be focused on the enablement of teacher learning; it does not matter if linguistic knowledge is not included and therefore, this kind of knowledge (syntax, pragmatics, phonology, etc.) does not guarantee that they are able to transfer these elements to their students.

One of the issues raised concerns whether teachers' beliefs and the theory they work on as part of their teaching preparation affect the courses they teach. Johnson (2002), highlights the value of finding synergy among these elements so curricular changes can be fostered. The author claims that this should be a

collaborative and iterative process in which educators can develop reflective teaching actions and theorizing opportunities for their own benefit and the benefit of their institutions. Johnson's participants (2002) (n=86) report on the positive impact that raising awareness of the internal components of language had in boosting foundational knowledge underlying their professional development.

In a similar vein, González and Quinchía (2011) emphasize the importance of knowing the reality and the problems that educators have previously faced in their contexts for the training to be meaningful and objective. The authors also demonstrate that teacher trainers must be equipped with the necessary skills (i.e. language) to deliver efficient training and also with the knowledge on the target audience participating in the program. González and Quinchía (2003) state that teachers consider the exchange of knowledge with a trainer as a benefit especially regarding research experience, culture, and improvement in language proficiency.

The benefits of endorsing new PD in the present times are also recalled by Granados (2009), who highlights the fact that students possess needs that are no longer focused on content, materials, or topics. Instead, they need to develop lifelong learning skills that help them to be better able to face the outside world. A call for strategies to gauge PD is also made by the author including but not restricted to sharing with other teachers and their teaching context and the inclusion of critical thinking skills development to make informed decisions in the classroom.

Not only do Ferrer-Ariza & Poole (2018) support the aforementioned tenets, but they also emphasize the high value that the creation of teacher development programs brings to teachers and institutions. PD should focus on issues such as consolidating up-to-date teaching practices, increasing collegial work among teaching peers, and using reflection as a core component in the teaching process.

PD opportunities range from short-, mid-, and long-term plans. Considering long-term opportunities, Viáfara and Largo (2018) discuss the positive impact of studying in a master's degree program in Colombia and how this endeavor helps teachers to better understand the educational policies for adjusting and modifying their curricula. This aspect involves reflecting upon their own process and realizing the importance of research and reflection to reformulate professional practices while they develop empowerment to foster policy and curricular change in their institutions. In addition to this, collaboration adds significantly to PD as it allows teachers to work together and serve as conduits to generate enhanced teaching plans.

Therefore, in living in exponential change times, one cannot ignore the endorsement of methodologies that gauge student-centered learning practices,

requiring high doses of scaffolded work from teachers. It is necessary to mention that in terms of professional development, teachers should be constantly building their knowledge also in a process of learning, as Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) mention. When teachers become researchers and the theory that they know starts taking shape and coming to life with all the experiences that happen in and outside the classroom. Hence, the more expedite decisions are made to favour such process, the better results are gauged to aid the cycle and its agents: the teacher as a teacher, the teacher as a learner, and the learners themselves.

Methodology

This exploratory qualitative study took place at five schools from five different cities in Colombia: Bogotá, Chía, Tenjo, Facatativá, and Girardot. All ethical procedures corresponding to a study of this kind, such as the signing of consent forms, validation, piloting, and management of data were followed. The role of the researcher was of a participant one and adopted different levels of involvement in the research situation (Burns, 1999)

Context and Participants

Participant schools were chosen taking into consideration that they all shared the same features: type of schools (private), approach to language learning using task-based methodology, and CLIL and communicative approach. Besides, they all had the same course resources Thumbs Up[3] (Fash, Harris, Hobbs, & Keddle, 2012), and had accessed the same digital resources including but not restricted to apps and online platforms.

The participants were six English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, who worked in primary levels in Colombian schools from Bogotá, Chía, Tenjo, Facatativá, and Girardot (Table 1. summarizes general data of each institution). These teachers have worked with the school for more than a year and had at least one year of experience in the use of the target book. Their ages ranged from 21 to 50 years old (M=33.8).

[3] Thumbs Up! is a series of textbooks used in the participant schools (Levels 1-5).

Table 1. General data of each institution

Institution	Number of English teachers	Number of students	Does it have an English coordinator?
School 1	11	1611	Yes
School 2	29	1002	Yes
School 3	3	145	No
School 4	10	625	No
School 5	1	87	No

Instruments

Interviews

Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to individuals and a way to collect data through conversations (Kajornboon, 2005). Moreover, interviewees can discuss their perceptions and interpretations regarding a given situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The researcher conducted one interview with all participants at the beginning of the study (Appendix A). The rationale behind the use of interviews in this study focused on having a broad understanding of teachers' views regarding their teaching practice and their actions in implementing new methodologies in their classes. Five of the six teachers were interviewed in person at each of the schools. One teacher was interviewed via cell phone, making use of WhatsApp™ functionalities, given that the teacher was not available during the time the visit at school was programmed. All data from the interviews was transcribed, and the analysis included a careful reading of the transcripts and a manual extraction from raw data. Data was then summarized onto a MS Excel matrix. Verbatim transcription procedures were also exercised, capturing each interaction with the individuals including pauses, non-verbal utterances, and even silence from audio recordings into a text format. This was done to enrich the breadth and depth of data by presenting quotations as evidence and presenting spoken words for explanation of how situations might have happened (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).

Web-based Questionnaires

A web-based questionnaire is a survey instrument that collects data via the Internet, and that can generally collect extensive amounts of data in a rapid form (Creswell, John & Poth, 2018). In this study, a web-based questionnaire designed by the researcher and his/her advisor was used to gather information

from teachers regarding their professional backgrounds and their understanding and experiences in the use of CLIL, in order to compare data with the responses obtained in the interviews (Appendix B).

Field journals

The purpose of this instrument was to track and account for teachers' experiences inside the classroom and find out about how they planned, designed, and integrated different aspects in their lessons. According to Friedemann, Mayorga, and Jimenez (2011), journals enhance the interpretation of data collected through other sources through introspection. Field journals were used every time the researcher visited the institution and observed the lessons. A total of five observations of the teachers were made. The field journals were stored digitally easing retrieval and analysis of data (Appendix C).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Two instruments were designed and applied *in-situ* (interviews and field journals), and one instrument, a questionnaire, was applied online via Google Forms™. The researcher designed both a draft and a final version of these instruments and validated them with a peer and his/her expert advisor. A total of five observations were conducted of each of the participants of the study, from April to August 2018.

All data gathered was anonymized and participants' responses were issued a code (T1, T2, T3, etc.). Grounded theory and its core process coding were used to analyze data, transcending through the three main coding stages (open, axial, and selective), making use of several strategies such as comparison and contrast, questioning, and color-coding, and triangulation and validation procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). A MS Excel™ matrix was used to handle data throughout the coding process.

Results and Discussion

Three main categories emerged from the analysis of the collected data: limitations to conceptualize CLIL, planning and implementing with a contextual focus on mindplanning and implementation, and resources offered by the school that support CLIL implementation. These categories appeared to support CLIL implementation; all of them integrated the core category named: Advocating for a situated practice in CLIL (Figure 1). Resultant categories revealed the existence of factors and conditions that intervened and affected the success of CLIL implementation in schools. A detailed explanation of each of these data sets is described as follows.

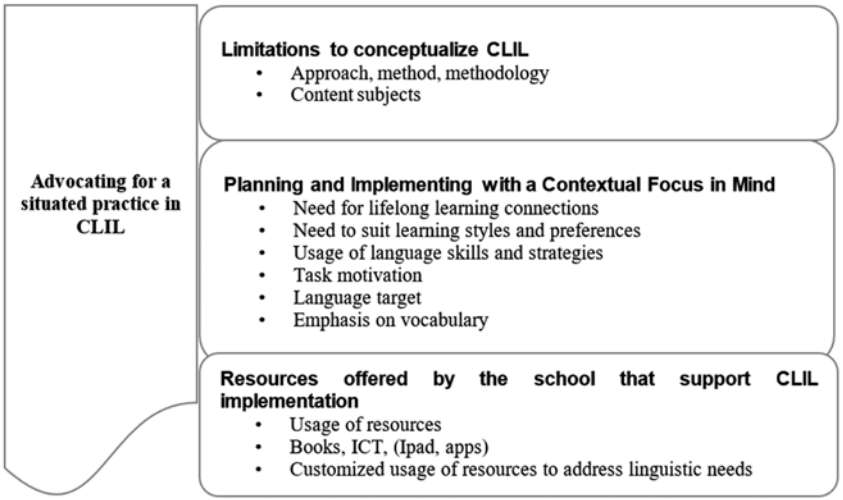

Figure 1. Description of the categories and associated factors in the study

Limitations to conceptualize CLIL

Results indicated that teachers showed some basic knowledge about the CLIL approach. This came up after asking "what is CLIL for you?" when teachers were interviewed. Several answers indicated basic recognition of what the approach entails: "*it is an approach that includes content, topics and English language learning (T1)"*, "*it is a method in which you teach English and other content*" (T2), and "*it is a pedagogical and methodological tool to learn another language."* (T6). However, further analyses of data allowed the researcher to see that teachers have difficulties recognizing elements and intervening factors to gauge effective usage of CLIL (evidenced during class observations). This aspect echoes the claims by Lo (2014), which indicated that the content teacher just focuses on the subject, and the foreign language is not an issue in the class as long as the student is able to respond and develop the activities for achieving the objectives for the class. It can be said that the study participants recognize the relationship between content and language (theory), but they do not seem to know how to apply it (application).

In the examined population, the teacher was the one in charge of planning the class based on some basic guidelines provided by the school. The researcher found that the involved institutions also shared a factor in common: the model and the methodology to teach English and content were not defined. Each institution relies on the decisions that teachers make and find appropriate. In two of the five schools, there are English coordinators to guide the planning

and implementation phases. The remaining three do not count on this support source, as evidenced in the observations *in-situ* and in the interviews with teachers.

Another particular element found in the study has to do with the training of teachers, due to the fact that none of the participants were content teachers. Hence, it was found both in the data collected in field journals and in the interviews with teachers, that the research participants focused more on the mere teaching of language structures rather than the idea of teaching or including different content subjects.Consequently, the notion of implementing CLIL is highly restrictive, as they do not only possess limited skills in the field, their actions are limited to the usage of pre-designed vocabulary lists included in the course resources (chosen by the school), and the use of resources and digital aids that are provided to the teacher. T6 insights reflect such panorama:

Interviewer: *How have you implemented CLIL in your institution*?

T6: "*Through the books used by the school, I bring to the class vocabulary and information from different subjects*".

Planning and Implementating with a Contextual Focus in Mind

For this category questions that aimed at recognizing the impact of CLIL in the research participants' classes were prompted. In the interview, an initial question guided the discussion: How can the integration of different content areas influence the process of learning a foreign language in your students? The teachers' answers mentioned elements like brodadening the scope of strategies to learn and finding ways to enhance the processing and understanding of information. Hence, teachers recognize the importance of integrating content areas in their language class advocating for the use of target strategies and skills, as Korosidou and Griva (2016) also found in their study.

As it has been previously mentioned, the use of new vocabulary reflects what teachers think in regard to planning and implementation. T4 exemplifies such ideas stating: *"In my class I teach weather and the solar system,"* referring to the areas, contexts, and lexicon they focus on in class. In the examined data, all teachers referred to plan, taking into consideration contextual issues that help students analyze daily situations especially in regard to the environment. According to Trujillo Becerra, Alvarez Ayure, Zamudio Ordoñez, and Morales Bohórquez (2015), and Mendieta Aguilar (2009) this denotes an increasing interest for teachers to plan their classes with a premise of more real contexts activities. These also lead to enriched comprehension for students in that lifelong learning connections are built, and knowledge is expanded based on inquiry processes.

T4 asserts that *"by integrating different content areas, the process of learning a foreign language results in the discovery of new ways of learning in students"* indicating that it is possible to avow that there is a hidden approach that arises when teachers recognize that the diversification of strategies help students acquire knowledge related to different subjects. Thus, it is possible to assert, based on the findings, that teachers apply CLIL principles without knowing it.

In agreement with Otwinowska and Foryś (2017), the present study also found that barriers in terms of language occurred. Since it differs from the regular lexicon known by students in the language lesson, the interaction and learning process proposed in the language class gets modified for an academic proficiency from both agents: teachers and students. In Pappa, Moate, Ruohotie-Lyhty, and Eteläpelto (2017), this could be associated to the cognitive weight/load that students may feel, since their classes are restrained to a complex language that is needed as a part of the input component incorporated in class. That is why, as these authors have indicated, the time devoted to explanation, elaborated language, and material required is a necessary part of an optimal planning process. As a result, the selection of knowledge is not limited to conventional practices, and new forms of assessment also take place.

In the present study, it was found that in four out of the six cases, teachers reported difficulties when delivering their lessons because their students needed additional training in the understanding of the target lexicon and communication functions beneath the lessons. The situation gets worse, when teachers themselves have barriers in their linguistic proficiency, which severely hinders the accurate delivery of linguistic targets. In three of the six cases examined, it was evident that teachers possessed limitations in this regard.

Resources offered by the school that support CLIL implementation

Starting from the notion that all institutions in this study have the same chances to use the resources provided by the schools, it is possible to assert that teachers value the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) as an engine to make classes more dynamic, leaving aside the conventional textbook usage, and including a digital aid to increase levels of interaction (Moore, 1989). Findings reveal that teachers display high engagement in the learning and usage of ICT inside and outside the class, a concomitant finding of Liu, Lin and Zhang (2017).

The variety of resources used by the research participants included printed books, apps, and devices (i.e. iPads). Through these resources, teachers could find activities and projects that were mainly based on the CEFR to develop linguistic competences and lifelong learning skills. The question: "*How could*

you integrate the resources that your school uses and the CLIL approach in your classes?" had several responses. On the one hand, T1 said: "*to include areas and knowledge*," while T6 said: "*to integrate learning, acquisition, skills and understanding*," and T2 stated: "*the book has CLIL*." Therefore, in the present study teachers are cognizant that the resources provided support CLIL usage; however, they adhere to such simplistic use and remain generating content and resource-based practices rather than advocating for skill or process-based ones which entail effective planning, follow-up, and assessment. All of them report making use of traditional drill-based and fill-in-the-gap tasks to assess language performance. In agreement with González Moncada (2007), despite the variety offered in resources and approaches, ultimately the teacher is solely the one in charge of making the decisions in the class and examining ways to select and use available resources.

Core category: Advocating for a situated practice in CLIL

The assembly of the previously mentioned categories suggests the situated practice approach as a main factor or condition that intervene in the implementation of CLIL in the context under investigation. It would allow teachers to make use of their existing knowledge of CLIL by operationalizing the ways in which language and content can be integrated while using students' life experiences to create meaningful classroom activities within a community of learners (The New London Group, 1996). In doing so, such situated practice will not only bridge students' and teachers' views and acts within a dialogic approach to teaching, but also integrates students' primary knowledge by allowing teachers to carefully observe students to discover what they know and what they are already able to do (Henderson, 2012). With such knowledge their language learning can be better mapped and sequenced.

There remain several challenges to be addressed such as the effective planning and implementation of the approach *per se*. Although teachers recognize the importance of using resources and establishing lifelong connections in the English class, they hardly ever know how to make them evident in their planning, resorting to highly traditional ways of teaching language and content. The claims from T1, clearly illustrate such intake, and the needs and horizons, CLIL practitioners should lead: "*Although the CLIL proposal has been integrated into the classes from the books worked by the institution, an approach like CLIL demands new challenges that are beyond books or a new curriculum. Somewhat, it requires the construction of learning environments that stimulate the development of new skills, different from those already practiced in the acquisition of a second language" (T1).*

Pedagogical implications

The study has put in evidence the knowledge, actions and needs of a group of teachers. Not only have the findings unveiled the need for teacher preparation to follow-up on CLIL instructional process, but also, they have pinpointed possible areas to focus on to find synergy between teaching and learning with the goal of using CLIL smoothly in the language class. Based on the findings collected in the present study, it is argued that teachers find a breach to transfer theory into practice. Therefore, it is highly beneficial to scaffold them with target guidelines derived both from the analysis of the context, their educational institution goals, and the overall learning standards, congruent with the expected performances of worldwide English language users.

At a novice level, teachers should be provided with lesson scaffolds, so they are better able to plan their classes, targeting at efficient lesson and course design, implementation, and assessment. Appendix A is a simple example of initial guides that can assist teachers in doing so. The lesson plan draws on the tenets proposed by Coyle (2006) and, based on this study findings, offers a sequential and practical approach to plan lessons. It does so by being framed on situated practice principles and diversified ways to assess language and learning themselves.

Understanding that a situated practice in CLIL requires agents to guide such scaffolding process, the role of the teacher/instructor is compatible with the one of a mentor and facilitator. Thus, switching to new power relationships in which knowledge is co-constructed. In this line of thought, the mentor should make a thorough analysis of the needs of the students such as affective, linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural as accurate assessments can guide learners developmentally towards success and growth (The New London Group, 1996). Besides, we once again advocate for the importance of training teachers and teacher trainers themselves, so they develop awareness-raising processes, and trace effective actions on the development of a situated practice in CLIL.

In agreement with Granados (2009), teachers should constantly engage a culture of reflection and analysis based on their class experiences, examining how implementations should (or not) work in a given context in this case specifically in Colombia, while fostering critical assessment and feeding their professional engagement for the benefit of their educational communities. These actions can also be at the core of study groups, communities of practice and further spaces, specifically designed for dissemination of findings such as of colloquia, symposia, and conferences.

Resources support the teaching practices and appear as part of the English teaching process to assist the teacher. This study relates to Knight

(2015), in how the textbook offers limited possibilities in an era where students can have a vast variety of information online, nevertheless, it is still observed how nowadays it is important to have a point of reference to help teachers in planning their classes. Knight (2015) also remarks how the textbook can aid teachers in comprehending the scope, sequence, and learning activities of the course, while it offers additional resources available via a learning management system. However, Ball (2018) draws on one of the initial premises discussed in this manuscript, highlighting the needs for adaptation to suit the target teaching and learning context. The author suggests having in mind three elements: concepts, procedures, and language.

The current research goes together with Biçaku (2011), as she also found out that teachers are implementing an approach without knowing it or having basic ideas about what is sought along the continuum. In other words, teachers might teach and use the approach guided by their intuition. Nevertheless, content teachers have an active role in the implementation of the approach in their role as experts in concepts who can certainly contribute to develop language skills in context. In addition to this, results from the present study coincide with Vázquez and Alcalá (2010), which defies to adapt the CLIL curriculum, its didactic units, and the resources themselves to generate success in the implementation of the approach. Likewise, both, this study and Vásquez and Alcalá's (2010) indicate that teachers still place high value on the use of the textbook. These are considered as vital for them in planning and guiding the conceptual and theoretical principles beneath the language and content lesson.

Concluding remarks

The present study portrays the challenges and opportunities reported by six teachers in regard to the implementation of CLIL. The findings elucidate how despite the existence of standards and plans to generate efficiency in the teaching of foreign languages as proposed by the MEN as part of the Colombian bilingualism plan, there are barriers to understanding, development, and growth of CLIL as an approach that contributes to such goals.

The studied populations do still struggle with the identification of factors to situate CLIL as an approach that does not limit to enhance linguistic target lifelong skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Most participants of this study are traditionally-led teachers and agents that act in accordance with the guidelines that their schools demand and have not yet approached alternative pedagogies. Leaving aside their contexts and student needs and prioritizing the decision-making exerted by their institution, the textbook is the leading element in their planning. This has unveiled the diffuse connections between effective language and content planning and perse development and it has also evidenced in their tendency

to foster vocabulary learning over an integrated skill development, which not only resorts merely to linguistic but also lifelong learning dimensions.

The study also evinced teachers' lack of use of target CLIL scaffolds such as lesson plans that could assist the language and content development progress. The examined lesson plans (assessed in the preliminary phase of the study) reveal that teachers reported an incongruence amongst language and content elements. Instead, they demonstrated that teachers continue to focus more on developing lexicon over content. None of the surveyed teachers use a specific CLIL lesson planning format, thus these types of connections remain scarce or even inexistent. As previously reported, their lesson routes were traced by the target textbook's scope and sequence. Thus, it is argued that if planning is the basis for efficient interventions, formats viewed as scaffolds need to be highly structured, managed, and familiar to the target users (teachers), so they can be used flexibly, in a variety of moments across the CLIL lessons. Hence, teachers need to be cognizant of the target integrations between language, content, and learning. As an attempt to bridge such a gap, this study suggests the use of a customizable CLIL lesson plan, which can be used in initial scaffolding stages for any CLIL practitioner (Appendix D).

Hence, we advocate for the rational use of resources in the CLIL classroom, and the instructional and pedagogical savvy that teachers, practitioners, and educational stakeholders need to build in order to better assess their contexts, plan efficiently based on their goals and expected outcomes, and on their available infrastructure including educational resources. In contexts like Colombia, the call for customization will be always made as every learner population might be different, although they all attempt to develop the same target language objectives. This study might have contributed to portray both assets and challenges when teachers use CLIL, with the aim to assist textbook designers, teachers, stakeholders, and curriculum developers. However, it is noted that although the accounts presented in this manuscript can hold limitations regarding the generalizability of results, the analysis made discusses essential considerations in the CLIL field, both concerning instructional and pedagogical matters, while keeping in mind how the design of situated practices can bridge existing gaps in language teaching, learning and in the integration of CLIL in the language classroom itself.

According to Sylvén (2013), there are factors that determine the success of learning English as a foreign language that correlate with the present study in terms of the design of a policy/framework that is needed to aid the understanding and exercising of CLIL in given contexts. In Colombia, there is not yet a target policy that establishes how CLIL should be implemented, and while one is created, teachers will remain in charge of creating their own programs. They will need sufficient support and training by stakeholders and

expert instructors to be able to move from the mere prioritization of the textbook as the main course material to engaging in the development of target essential lifelong learning skills in the CLIL classroom supported by myriad educational sources now available in the current information era. In addition to this, much is needed still to suit a gradual incorporation of cultural aspects (Banegas, 2014) in the CLIL curriculum, to bridge communication, content, and culture gaps more successfully. This could be set as a future area to research on.

Thus, we believe that constant CLIL professional development opportunities need to be accessible to a wider variety of teachers, as we argue that such opportunities hardly ever impact public, rural, or small city communities such as those of the present study in Colombia and are restricted to intensive or bilingual private contexts. Engaging in further outreach efforts concerning teachers' difficulties, achievements, and opportunities towards the integration of language and content will not only assure a broader understanding of CLIL practices, but also will serve to foster a development plan with specific target actions to address along the process. Moreover, it generates connections between theory and practice by viewing teaching and learning as a contextualized mission that makes use of an integrated approach to gauge progress on student and teacher cognition and action.

Further research should examine the ways in which CLIL is implemented and operationalized through specific assessment measures in the language classroom. Although the analysis conducted in the present study offers a scope unveiling target features concerning effective implementations and situated practices, more work is needed in the design of instruments, procedures, and plans. These can assist teachers in planning, design, and intervention phases as well as they can help them develop strategic assessment measures. The end goal is helping teachers gain understanding about the real purpose of CLIL as an efficient approach to foster language development.

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Appendix A

Interview to teachers

1. What is CLIL for you?
2. How have you implemented CLIL, can you name an example?
3. How can you improve your planning skills based on the training given on CLIL?
4. How can the integration of different content areas influence the process of learning a foreign language in your students?
5. How could you integrate the resources that your school uses and the CLIL approach in your classes?

*This interview was designed by Cuesta Medina, L. and Torres, J. C. (2018).

Appendix B

Questionnaire

Demographics	
Gender	
Age range	
Teaching experience (in years)	
First language	
Type of institution	
Name of institution	
Level of students you teach	
Your English level (CEFR)	
Your current post	
My Beliefs and Experiences About CLIL	
1.	Have you implemented CLIL in your institution?
2.	Yes/No. Why? (if you answer YES, continue to the next item, if you answered NO, skip and go to question 5)
3.	If you answered yes to the former item, describe the challenges that you currently face when /while implementing CLIL at your institution?
4.	What resources might be needed in order to succesfully implement CLIL at your institution?
5.	What would you need to initiate a CLIL project at your institution?
6.	How confident do you feel about integrating thinking skills with language teaching?
7.	How confident do you feel about integrating content with language teaching?
8.	How confident do you feel about integrating culture with language teaching?
9.	How confident do you feel about identifying language teaching opportunities within the content of other curricular areas?
10.	When planning, how do you do it? Explain.
11.	Do you have to use an existing syllabus or curriculum?
12.	How do you select new knowledge, skills and understanding of the theme you teach?
13.	When planning, do you prioritize the content to be included?
14.	Why?
15.	In your opinion, does CLIL require a lot of administrative support?
16.	Why?
17.	Does your principal, director, coordinator, favor the implementation of CLIL?
18.	Is your school staff knowledgeable about the CLIL approach?
19.	Do the language teachers at your school take a collaborative approach in terms of planning for instruction?
20.	Include any additional comments

*This questionnaire was designed by Cuesta Medina, L. and Torres, J. C. (2018).

Adapted from Cuesta Medina L. and McDougald, J. S. (2017).

Appendix C

Field Journal. Observation Registry Form.

Name of School	
Grade	
Date	
Subject	
Teacher	

Criteria	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments**
Presentation of class objective.			
Evidence of students' opportunities to show what they are learning.			
Evidence of lesson sequencing.			
Variety of learning activities provided.			
Evidence of resources used.			

Comments:

Feedback and recommendations

(To be used in the post-lesson conversation with the teacher)

*This field journal was designed by Cuesta Medina, L. and Torres, J. C. (2018).

Appendix D

CLIL Lesson Plan

Topic of the day:
Previous knowledge: (recap from last class)
Class objectives: (include performance-based indicators)
A. Content outcome (include lifelong learning contexts for students)
B. Cognition outcome
C. Communication outcome
Language of learning (vocab & grammar)
Language for learning (expressions for discussion)

Language through learning (combination of vocabulary and specific subject content knowledge)
D. Culture/ Citizenship (relate topics to your local context)
Material and resources
Activities plan
1.
2.
3.
General Assessment
Comments/Homework

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Exploring the Funds of Knowledge with 108 Guatemalan Teachers[1]

Una Exploración con 108 Docentes Guatemaltecos de los Fondos de Conocimientos

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Abstract

Using a reflective exercise designed for this study, Guatemalan educators explored their students' and their own cultural capital. The *cultural capsule exercise* served as a vehicle to bring delicate issues that are difficult to discuss, but that are essential to effective schooling, to reflective conversations. A total of 108 teachers went beyond identifying problems and detailing frustrations, to exploring possibilities for action. Participants converged in sharing perspectives that Guatemala is a culture of silence, and used examples to illustrate how this perpetuates the limitations of the country's schoolhouse. Findings reveal the teachers were challenged to focus on what can be accomplished. Qualitative data analyzes, conducted using symbolic convergence theory to establish recurrent and idea generation, suggest a need for further examination of how the sociocultural educational mandates delimit teachers' ability to adjust the curriculum in consideration of learners' funds of knowledge.

Keywords: teachers' voices; cultural capital; funds of knowledge; reflective educators; diverse indigenous cultures of Guatemala

Resumen

Docentes de una comunidad de Guatemala examinaron el capital cultural de sus estudiantes y de si mismos, usando un ejercicio desarrollado para este estudio. El *ejercicio de la cápsula cultural* sirvió de vehículo para aportar a la conversación temas que, aunque delicados y difíciles de aproximar, son esenciales para establecer sistemas escolares efectivos. Un total de 108 maestros compartieron y detallaron sus frustraciones, y comenzaron a explorar cambios que ellos mismos podrían llevar a cabo. Los participantes convergieron en sus ideas para verificar sus puntos de vista que Guatemala es una cultura de silencio. Ellos ofrecieron ejemplos que detallaron el por

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qué, este silencio perpetúa y limita la escolarización. Datos cualitativos, documentados usando la teoría de la convergencia simbólica, se usaron para establecer temas que se repitieron y generaron ideas. Investigaciones futuras han de examinar el contexto educacional y sociocultural que evidentemente delimita cómo en Guatemala los maestros y sus estudiantes se desenvuelven en las escuelas, y consideran sus fondos de conocimientos.

Palabras Claves: voces de los maestros; el capital cultural; educación liberatoria; culturas indígenas de Guatemala

Resumo

Docentes de uma comunidade da Guatemala examinaram o capital cultural dos seus estudantes e de si mesmos, usando um exercício desenvolvido para este estudo. O exercício da cápsula cultural serviu de veículo para aportar à conversação temas que, mesmo que delicados e difíceis de aproximar, são essenciais para estabelecer sistemas escolares efetivos. Um total de 108 mestres compartilharam e detalharam suas frustrações, e começaram a explorar mudanças que eles mesmos poderiam realizar. Os participantes convergiram em suas ideias para verificar seus pontos de vista que a Guatemala é uma cultura de silêncio. Eles ofereceram exemplos que detalharam o porquê, este silêncio perpetua e limita a escolarização. Dados qualitativos, documentados usando a teoria da convergência simbólica, usaram-se para estabelecer temas que se repetiram e geraram ideias. Pesquisas futuras haverão de examinar o contexto educacional e sociocultural que evidentemente delimita como na Guatemala os mestres e seus estudantes se desenvolvem nas escolas, e consideram seus fundos de conhecimentos.

Palavras Chaves: vozes dos mestres; o capital cultural; educação liberatória; culturas indígenas da Guatemala

Introduction

In effective schooling systems, teachers' expertise is valued, and social justice paradigms are supported (Daniel, Riley, & Kruger, 2017; Daniel, 2016: Faust, 2016; Kincheloe, 2008; Wertsch, 1990). This research considers teachers' perspectives and insights related to the value that is placed on social justice in Guatemala's school system. Diverse schooling environments such as Guatemala need to recognize the funds of knowledge of all learners' and their teachers' in the school curriculum (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Ruiz, 1984). Guatemala's cultural and linguistic diversity is vast as evidenced in the 23 recognized indigenous languages spoken in the nation (World Fact Book, 2017). Although today many of these languages exist only in oral form, they continue to be used by families in their homes and neighborhoods, and for conducting business in many of the country's communities. A substantial number of the Maya who reside in rural areas, earn their living selling handicrafts and food in the outdoor markets that dot the Guatemalan landscape. Many Guatemalans struggle to meet basic needs. Of those who reside in rural communities, only 49.3% have access to sanitation facilities (Behrman, Murphy, Quisumbing, & Yount, 2009). While 51% of the country's overall consumption can be attributed to those at the top 20% socioeconomic level, 23% of the population struggles with extreme poverty (World Fact Book, 2017). For educators, confronting perceptions that may couch the existence of problems, is beneficial. Using wide angle lenses to examine both sides of problems with a view to honest disclosures will promote identification of unsolved issues and may overturn status quo assumptions of intolerance and social injustice.

The Cultural Capital Exercise, hereafter known as CCE, developed for this study, was based on the idea that teachers and students need to examine their backgrounds, and the influences that led them to become who they are, in order to grasp what they bring to the classroom context. The word *capsule* was selected instead of the word baggage, because it positively highlights the contributions of families' cultural norms and the strengths of communities. Participants were to envision an expanding capsule that, once opened, would allow the individual to engage in an ongoing reflection of the items selected for inclusion, and to share these key pieces of themselves in a thoughtful manner. Instructions were to create a visual representation using only drawings of people, places, and objects, and the use of letters or words was forbidden in the idea sharing. The CCE asked teachers not to worry about the size of the capsule that they were creating, because it would hold everything they identified as the heart and essence of their being. The goal of the CCE was to identify memories, events, and interactions with significant people that, from our formative years on, make each of us unique, using art to imprint the memory system (Daniel, 2017, Daniel & Huizenga Mc Coy, 2014). After

participants prepared the drawings for their capsule, they shared what they discovered during the process in small groups prior to giving their drawings to the researchers. The steps of the CCE served as a scaffold to examine the funds of knowledge in the school community.

This study explored 108 Guatemalan teachers' understandings of their students' cultural capital, and their perceptions of how this impacts schooling practices. In this work, the researchers examined educators' attitudes and how their perceptions support or oppose frameworks that reflect a sociocultural theory of learning (Freire, 2002). Participants began an exploration of the concept of the funds of knowledge within their communities of practice (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Participants participated in workshops in which they first explored their cultural norms and their students', and then considered what they might wish to place in a cultural capsule to share the wonder and uniqueness of their communities. The qualitative exercise ensured anonymity of the participants so that they would feel free to express their positive and negative opinions.

Literature Review

Liberating Education

In his work Freire (2002) was concerned with education that is *dehumanizing.* The CCE used in this study was intended to tug at the humanity of the teachers who participated. Freire used conversational circles with peasants in Brazil to facilitate conversations. He wanted them to grasp that maintaining silence would perpetuate existing conditions and frustrations. His efforts centered on creating citizens who could contribute to their communities in peaceful and skillful communication (Faundez, 2001). This required that he teach the peasants ways to question the status quo, and learn ways to stand up for their rights. This involved breaking long standing cultural habits, with the most important one being acquiescent behaviors ingrained in children's upbringing.

Freire (2002) proposed situational contexts need to be examined in collaboration, research, and advocacy efforts that consider all individuals' acts and attitudes central to the validation of humanity and democratic citizenship (Daniel & Riley, 2018; Jakar & Milofsky, 2016). Guatemala's history of domination of the indigenous and a lack of appreciation of their languages continues (Guadarrama, 2013). In this study we looked at life and schooling in Guatemala in consultation with educators currently employed in Guatemala's public school system. These educators followed our lead to reveal truths that they struggle with daily, such as childhood hunger and abuse, and to validate their struggles and recognize non-schooled knowledge and community

networks (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). The CCE was used in an effort to unearth evidence in the participants' minds of the ways that their communities of origin, and their students', evidence jeweled stores of funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Challenges to Schooling in Guatemala

Guatemalan educators want to create environments that give students a framework to discover new ideas and create visions of satisfying lives. They struggle to do so given that in Guatemala many schools are buildings without potable water, with sanitation facilities that are not hygienic, and do not have libraries. These circumstances apply to schools in remote rural areas and to many in the capital city.

Data documented by the World Fact Book (2017) reveals information useful in understanding contextual factors that affect students' academic success such as the 40% poverty levels of the Maya. Data documents that over 80% of Guatemalans are literate in Spanish, but there are no rates available to indicate biliteracy levels for the indigenous. Expenditures for education in Guatemala equal only three percent of the gross national product. School attendance from primary to tertiary levels is higher for males but more and more females are gaining access to education (World Fact Book, 2017). Half of the country's population resides in rural areas and is under 19 years of age.

In their summative evaluations of learners across the country of Guatemala, the Office of Evaluation and Educational Research, known by the acronym DIGEDUCA, documents that learners' educational problems begin to surface at primary school when children drop out of school to help support their families (2014). This agency reports academic achievement for learners at grade six in reading and mathematics at 40 and 44% respectively, with students from rural areas achieving lower levels of success in meeting national standards. In the long run, the problem affects the earning power and economic stability of both those who never complete a high school education, and of those whose education does not lead to a college degree (DIGEDUCA, 2014).

Teacher Preparation in Guatemala

As of 2013, the Normal School teacher training model was no longer in place. This model involved future teachers in preparatory programs during their last two years of high school. This was cost efficient and produced many teachers with initial licensure without families incurring the cost of a college education (Guadarrama, 2013). When completion of a university degree became a requirement of all future teachers, intensive teacher training programs

began to be delivered on Saturdays. Programs at universities delivered in all day sessions on Saturdays allowed those interested in the profession to work in regular jobs during the week and finance their living expenses while studying.

The changes in requirements were instituted when the Ministry of Education, identified as MINEDUC hereafter, declared that students' academic achievement would be interpreted as a reflection of teachers' expertise. Orozco & Valdivia (2017) documented that changes were not piloted before implementation.

Methodology of Research

The questions that guided this study were focused on an exploration of Guatemalan educators' understanding of their students' and their own funds of knowledge, and the teachers' ability to educate while striving to overcome challenges to schooling in their communities of learning.

Q.1: What challenges to schooling are foremost in the teachers' minds?

Q.2: How do teachers explain the make-up of their students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge?

Q.3: How do teachers explain the make-up of their own cultural capital and funds of knowledge?

Q.4: How do teachers perceive their ability to overcome challenges to education in their schools?

Context and Participants

Participants represent educators from an urban municipality located northwest of Guatemala City, Guatemala. Participants were employed public school teachers at levels K-secondary, some from schools of only 12 teachers, and others represented schools with larger teaching staffs. The teachers ranged in age from 25 to 45 years of age, with four to twenty-five years of teaching experience. All participants completed their initial preparation to teach as part of their secondary curriculum in Guatemala's Normal Schools when this road to licensure was in place. A small number of the teachers were completing the work required for a post-graduate degree after initial certification.

Nine focus groups of 8-12 participants each were held with teachers who volunteered to be part of this study, to establish their challenges prior to participation in the three-hour workshops during completion of the CCE. Teachers were recruited to participate in this research with the assistance of the Guatemalan Literacy Council. Participants were ot compensated for their

participation. Data gathered served to compare and contrast the teachers' initial perceptions prior to the workshops, with those they shared after participation in the CCE. Two reiterations of the exercise were completed with each group of teachers, each followed by a debriefing. One workshop addressed identification of students' funds of knowledge, the other was centered on teachers' awareness and ability to examine and discuss the components of their own funds of knowledge. Each workshop involved participants in a conversation about what the funds of knowledge consists of, and why it is necessary that teachers consider their students' cultural capital as well as their own, in lesson planning.

Data Analysis

Across all phases of this qualitative study, emergent and recurrent themes were identified (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In addition, convergence of themes was documented using Symbolic Convergence Theory, hereafter identified as SCT (Daniel, 2010; Bohrmann, 1983).

Recurrent themes for the purpose of this qualitative research, and its examination of teachers' perspectives and what they perceive to be road blocks to students' academic achievement, refer to themes which arise during small group conversations not once but multiple times. Themes which repeat themselves across groups and within a single focus group merit consideration because their reoccurrence reveals that they are uppermost in participants' minds. Recurrent themes were identified as they emerged and then quantified during analysis to answer this study's questions.

SCT is a theory from the communications discipline that has proved useful in examining the development of ideas in exploration of delicate issues in education within small focus groups (Daniel, 2010). SCT has been used to examine consensus across focus group participants prior to initiating business ventures. It was the methodology selected to explore the possible financial success of the riverboat casino trade later established and currently flourishing in the State of Iowa in the United States (Bohrmann, 1983). Daniel used SCT some 18 years ago to investigate foreign language teachers' views of writing instruction in the foreign language classroom in her doctoral dissertation.

The power inherent in SCT is its assumption that human beings struggle to accept what they are not able to manage, and thus create dramatic visions or fantasies that will justify their inability to act. SCT facilitates travel beyond the drama that may prevent paths for action. Using SCT, a researcher is able to note themes that recur and that also create excitement in the environment across participants. SCT analysis allows researchers to delve deeper into the reasons human beings act as they do. In focus groups, contrasting comments allowed both the researchers and the participants to view possibilities for

action through clearer lenses. The teachers' evidenced excitement as well as revealed deflated visions of empowerment, When educators in focus group conversations voice opinions, they may begin to develop confidence that they themselves might generate purposeful and effective actions. The end result may be the creation of implementable new visions for improving the schoolhouse. Convergence thus arises when themes generate new ideas and possibilities for action that participants buy into, support, and subsequently use to create new paths for action. In this sequence of convergence and advocacy facilitated during the focus group conversations, one individual offers a thought to the group, another person might add to or disagree with the thought expressed, and as conversations evolve, pragmatic visions emerge. Pragmatic visions are plans for action that educators come to see as implementable and transforming.

Findings

The discussion that follows presents recurrent themes that resulted in convergence, during conversations with practicing teachers that were focused on the contribution of the funds of knowledge to instructional planning and delivery. Data is divided into three categories of information gathered from participants. Teachers' challenges at the start of the CCE are presented in Table 1: Teachers' Identified Challenges at the Start of the Exercise. Teachers' exploration of their students' funds of knowledge is detailed in Table 2: Students' Funds of Knowledge. Lastly, Table 3: Teachers' Reinterpreted Paths for Action, offers a summary of teachers' statements and their re-envisioned perspectives with possibilities for action identified after participation in the exercise.

Teachers' Identified Challenges at the Start of the CCE

Four groups of teachers identified problems they encounter in their work as educators in Guatemala. The problems they described related to themselves and the conditions in their schools. The teachers' comments demonstrated great concern for the welfare of their students. Table 1 includes statements from the teachers that resulted in convergence within the focus groups with issues divided into categories. All statements were translated to English from Spanish.

Table 1. Teachers' Challenges at the Start of the Exercise

	Curriculum	Infrastucture	Didactic Materials	Language	Other changes now inplace or needed
The mandated curriculum is a problem because we have to use the books from MINEDUC. What I am supplied for my first grade class is too hard for my students.	X		X		
They want me to teach English but I speak no English. See this mobile. I used the dictionary to look up the colors in English. On one side of each part of the mobile, I have, say yellow on one side and amarillo on the other. I don't know what the students can do with just isolated nouns.	X		X	X	
I know that tourism from the United States contributes to Guatemala's economy, but shouldn't we teach literacy in Spanish and our native languages before English?	X			X	
One good thing is that the children are no longer beaten at school. Well, at least in my class.					X
Meetings with parents that focus on the values identified by the Ministry are short and infrequent. We do not share our goals with parents well.	X	X			X
The books given to us to use are not appropriate for the grade level we teach. Children age five cannot read stories without pictures.	X		X		

I need more light in my classroom. The students can't see the board.		X			
Our schools do not have libraries.	X	X			
I share my secondary classroom in the afternoon with the fifth grade teacher who is assigned to the same room in the morning session. So we have two schools in one building. We cannot put anything on the walls or it will be gone the next day. We have a small locker to keep our supplies. We have to buy our markers, erasers, and paper.		X	X		
I am supposed to teach in kacchiquel (one of Guatemala's indigenous languages) but I really don't know the language. Sometimes I have students who have moved to this area who do not speak Spanish. They learn but it is a struggle.	X			X	
I worry about the children who come to school without having eaten breakfast. Many of them have not had supper the night before. We feed them in the middle of the morning and we can see how they do not pay attention because they are hungry.		X			X
The one bathroom in our school does not flush. We fill and pour a bucket of water in the toilet because we can't flush. There is only one stall for the teachers and the students! We have to bring our toilet paper. Of course, there is no seat on the toilet. There is no light in the tin cubby hole that is our bathroom.		X			

Learners' Cultures and Funds of Knowledge

As part of workshops centered on culture and its impact in teaching and learning, participants were asked to focus on the students in a class they were currently teaching, and to think about the culture of the entire group, and the differences across individual learners. At the beginning of the first workshop, an explanation of the meaning of cultural capital was shared with the teachers in a conversational question and answer format.

Cultural capital was explained as consisting of the knowledge present in the world views and cultural norms of students' families and communities, and in the danger inherent in societal frameworks that reproduce inequalities (Webb, Schirato, & Danager, 2008). Participation in this research composed the first time that the teachers had been exposed to the concepts of the funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). The teachers went beyond generalizations that might have their roots in the perception that all members of a community might have similar or somewhat identical world views. Explanations shared by the teachers included examples of components that influence the daily lives, traditions, customs, languages, and their habits as people from Guatemala. An exact definition of culture was not shared in this research.

The teachers understood the idea of having a culture, and were eager to share examples of the diverse cultures of Guatemala. Their examples related to indigenous languages, the music of Guatemala, and the traditional hand-woven clothing that through its design and color, identifies members of different areas and regions of their country. They also brought up *El Conflicto Armado*, Guatemala's Civil War, and its part in the people's history. The Civil War was a time of repression for Guatemalans, when atrocities occurred on the part of the Guatemalan army, when families were displaced and large numbers of women were widowed. The effects of the war can still be felt today, long after the Peace Accords were signed (United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Exploring what may make up the Guatemalan culture served as a link leading to a discussion of schooled and non-schooled funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). It was appropriate to highlight for the teachers that learners arrive at school with knowledge that can serve as a scaffold for the curriculum. The schoolhouse has to provide learners a path back to real life and economic underpinnings. The lecture conversation format also lent itself to address family networks as a key support system for learners. The family and the community in which an individual resides consist of persons who offer support and share their expertise with students, be it how to prepare a tortilla to leading a conversation in the town's colonial park.

Participants appeared to understand, yet there was hesitation in their faces and voices. Their uncertainty was couched, but revealed in the questions they asked, and how these demonstrated they were beginning to walk in unknown territory. This part of the workshop fulfilled the intent to provide a baseline of knowledge to

lead the teachers to collaborate in small groups of no more than three, to explore and identify the uniqueness of the cultures of each of their students.

Recurrent themes that resonated in teachers' small group work and whole group debriefing are listed below in Table 2: Students' Cultural Capsule. Information in this table reveals the teachers' struggles to identify the positives in students' lives. Table 2 includes both the positives and the negatives identified by the teachers. Their words, during this part of the workshop, document the teachers' grave concern for their students' safety and future.

Table 2. Students' Cultural Capsule

Walls in Students' Lives	**Positive Aspects of Students' Funds of Knowledge**
There is great poverty in the homes.	Traditions of the Maya; dress, music, foods, religious observances, languages.
Parents work at night and leave the young children with older siblings.	If children attend school, teachers can support their critical thinking.
Malnutrition	The Maya continue to fight for their rights.
The indigenous feel ashamed of their roots.	Parents are hard working
Unhygienic living conditions	Parents pass down ways to make a living, these may be limited to selling handicrafts on the street but we recognize that it is an art to weave and embroider.
Students are often aggressive and sad as a result of the abuse they witness in their homes. They come to school with bruises.	Children are colorful slates that must be recognized through a culturally responsive curriculum. They love unconditionally. For many, the love they receive at school is all there is.
Children are not encouraged to share their ideas. They are to keep quiet.	Guatemalan society is highly indigenous and there is an awareness that the Maya need greater educational support.
Children are afraid. They live witnessing injustices in their	Bilingual educational models in Guatemalan validate students' roots.

Teachers' Funds of Knowledge

Rather than identifying their funds of knowledge, the teachers focused on their work responsibilities. Their concern was the learners' affective and academic needs. They demonstrated feelings of frustration sharing perceptions that what they were doing was insufficient. Their instincts were to interpret their exploration of their funds of knowledge in terms of what they felt the children needed, as they evaluated their ability to support the learners in ways parents do not. They began the CCE examining their strengths as teachers to deliver MINEDUC's curriculum, and their words suggested that they were not crediting their efforts to adjust the curriculum.

Table 3: Teachers Cultural Capsule, provides information compiled during the first debriefing of the CCE with the teachers. It includes recurring comments grouped by theme that the teachers identified to be substantive elements to include. After this, the teachers continued the CCE in small groups, after participating in a whole group conversation. The larger group debriefing used their ideas as a starting point, to clarify the ways the teachers' funds of knowledge could be influencing their goals and objectives for the curriculum. As the teachers envisioned that there were possibilities for action, they dared to propose small ways to overcome challenges. It took them a bit of time but they began to present the problems and possible approaches to supporting the learners. See Table 4: Teachers' Reinterpreted Paths for Action.

Table 3. Teachers' Cultural Capsule

Recurrent Themes	**Teachers' comments**
The mandated curriculum	We follow MINEDUC's curriculum. We teach the students values. Our curriculum is heavily focused on the values of respect, love, honesty, tolerance, and loyalty.
Teachers recognize their efforts	We teach more than the curriculum. We teach solidarity, to love nature, to take on responsibility, that it is possible to live in harmony. We encourage the students to compete in good ways. We teach them table manners.
Work with parents	At our school we have meetings for the parents. MINEDUC asks us to teach them about values but what we do is not enough.
Home environments	We need to teach the children respect because they are not learning this at home. They see their fathers disrespecting their mothers. The mothers tell the children to be quiet. We are teachers but we must be psychologists!
Learners' affect	We are aware of the conflicting emotions that children bring to school. We teach them, or we try to teach them, that you do not have to live fighting.
Diversity	For many years now, the indigenous students and teachers have felt some respect. It used to be that they could not wear their woven clothes to schools.

Table 4. Teachers' Reinterpreted Paths for Action

Difficult Hurdles	**Reinterpreted Challenges**
Living conditions in the homes interfere with learning at school.	We can create comforting spaces in our classrooms.
The children are short of sleep. They go out to sell handicrafts with their parents at night and the next day they are tired.	Even when the learners are older, we can implement a 15 minute period put your head down on the desk naptime.
We only see the students a few hours a day! There is too much to do.	What we do may make a difference that we cannot see immediately.
We find the workshops from MINEDUC are not helpful.	Could we ask for time to share lessons with each other?
Many of our students are saddled with responsibilities that they should not have to handle.	We can recognize students' babysitting efforts so that they will feel appreciated. If the parents do not do this at home, we can at school.
The lack of respect that children receive at home is the knowledge that they bring to school.	We must not accept disrespectful behavior from students towards us or their classmates. Time talking about important issues is not a waste.
We have had students bring guns to school.	Our schools are in a dangerous neighborhood. We need to talk with students about being safe.
We feed students a snack midmorning but it is not substantial enough. It's often atol, a drink made from corn. What we give them at school is not nutritious! They wait for what we give them but they are still hungry after what they get here with us.	We know the students cannot learn if they are hungry. We see this every day. They hang out waiting for the snack which we know is breakfast for many of them. Could we ask the town's mayor for help?

Discussion

The teachers' initial struggles to identify students' funds of knowledge beyond language, music, dance and foods might at first suggest a token understanding of culture, which is an inaccurate assumption. An examination of the themes evident in comments, suggests a deep level of caring and reveals the teachers' ongoing efforts. Comments evidenced that the teachers focused on the learners, rather on looking for their strengths as educators. They did not easily recognize the many ways their life experiences and non-traditional schooling were providing them access to the difficult realities that they strive to help their students overcome. The teachers needed prodding to expose their fears and to reinterpret their challenges. Two stories shared in the

small groups, while the researcher listened to participants engage in the CCE, elicited symbolic convergence across the participants, first in each group, and later when presented in the whole group debriefing. The following anecdotes exemplify teachers' funds of knowledge and encapsulate their level of caring. We might conclude that the teachers do not hesitate to act when they see their students' affective needs.

A teacher listened cautiously as the researcher sat and talked to his group during the continuation of the CCE. He opened his heart to share his funds of knowledge. His words revealed that he was coming to understand that he accomplished more in his work than he realized. He admitted with a shake of the head, and wide-open eyes that demonstrated surprise, that he had not considered that when he noted his childhood experiences replicated in the lives of his students, he would step in and become the person he wished he had had as a teacher in middle school. Martín (a pseudonym) and his two siblings grew up in the outskirts of Guatemala City. He was a lucky child because he attended school on a regular basis, but after his school day ended, he was in charge of his younger sisters. His mother made handicrafts during the day and had no choice but to sell these at night to cover basic expenses at home. She would leave him in charge of children almost half his age. His father was not part of the picture and it was his job to feed and put his sisters to bed.

This next story is Javier's (a pseudonym), a 26 year-old secondary school teacher. He shared his story in the whole group debriefing, after having done so in the small group work. When he spoke one could hear gasps from participants, nods of agreement, voices recognizing the speaker, and at the end, thunderous clapping for the storyteller. Javier fondly remembered a student who always spoke of a father he had not met. The young man harbored the hope that his father might come home one day, and remained optimistic in spite of evidence that there would not be a meeting. Throughout the high school years, the teacher encouraged the student and their friendship blossomed over small triumphs and moments of support. The student worked hard and remained enrolled in school with the goal of becoming a teacher. Finally, as the day of graduation approached, the student voiced his last desperate hope that his father might surface. He shared with his mentor that if the father did not come for graduation, he would lose all hope of ever meeting him. His last hope was dashed but then a clearing became visible. The student spoke to his teacher after the graduation ceremony, and thanked him for his role in his success. He admitted that he had never had a father related to him by blood present in his life, but that he now realized that Javier had fulfilled his need to have a father.

Limitations of Study

This work contributes to the body of literature about education in Guatemala, and to understandings of the inter and intrapersonal experiences that frame educational frameworks in the country. However, its generalizability is limited for several reasons. First, all 108 participants taught in the same community of schools, and might hold perspectives that best mirror the needs of that specific area of the country. Secondly, the teachers were initially trained in the Normal Schools so none would evidence experiences or training that reflect recent changes in teacher preparation. Lastly, the teachers represented educators teaching at all grade levels, from pre-K to secondary school. Given the number of participants, it is impossible to state that sufficient generalizable data was gathered to make assumptions about the challenges faced by teachers and students at any one grade level of the community where the study was conducted.

Final Reflections

This investigation documents some of the challenges and frustrations that teachers and students in Guatemala's schools confront and how these worry the educators who were part of this study. Recurrent themes that demonstrated convergence, revealed in the data analyzes, suggests that teachers' self-esteem continues to be jeopardized by curricular mandates that are implemented without consultation with the country's educators.

This work offered a venue for Guatemalan educators to voice the reasons they and their students merit recognition for their efforts (Orozco & Valdivia, 2017), and validation of their communities' funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Findings document that Guatemalan teachers care deeply about their students.

In envisioning a better future for schooling in Guatemala, the country's educational community might recognize that it will not be until each stakeholder is free to identify that which supports or extinguishes individuality, independent thinking, and visions of change, that it will be possible to redesign a vision for how the environment addresses or denies paradigms that support democratic citizenship (Daniel & Riley, 2018; Jakar & Milofsky, 2016). A process of evaluating schooling practices and societal attitudes from a funds of knowledge philosophy is needed, to allow democratic ideologies of literacy to emerge and become sustainable. Teachers in the trenches need avenues to meet to discuss their work, and then design a plan to change an educational system that to them appears to present a series of closed doors.

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Autobiographies: a tool to depict English language learning experiences[1]

Autobiografías: una herramienta para representar experiencias de aprendizaje del idioma inglés

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Abstract

This article contains a description of a research project carried out with a group of English Language Pre-service Teachers (ELPTs) of a state University in Bogotá, Colombia. The purpose of the study was to portray the experiences, feelings and insights the ELPTs went through as English language learners. Autobiographies was the instrument to collect data. The results show that the English language learners' process of learning has a strong influence of the language policies connected to the National Program of Bilingualism. They also show that it is necessary to create a cumulative program of English for each phase of schooling in order to avoid overlapping and to provide a more motivating learning process. The conclusions confirm that through the implementation of autobiographies in the EFL classroom, teachers can feel connected to their students and understand their learning needs and interests from a more personal perspective.

Key words: Autobiography; Autobiographical research; English Language Learning; Motivation in Language Learning; National Program of Bilingualism.

Resumen

Este artículo contiene la descripción de un proyecto de investigación que se llevó a cabo con 26 estudiantes de un programa de licenciatura en inglés de una universidad pública en Bogotá, Colombia. El propósito del estudio fue retratar las experiencias de los estudiantes como aprendices de lengua, sus sentimientos y puntos de vista al respecto. La autobiografía fue el instrumento que se utilizó para recoger datos. Los

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resultados muestran que el proceso de aprendizaje de lengua tiene una fuerte influencia del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. También evidencian la necesidad de crear un currículo de inglés más amplio e incluyente, que tenga en cuenta lo aprendido en las diferentes etapas de la escuela para evitar la repetición de contenidos y propiciar un aprendizaje más motivador. En las conclusiones se confirma que la implementación de autobiografías en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera permite a los profesores entender las necesidades e intereses de sus estudiantes desde una perspectiva más personal.

Palabras clave: Autobiografía; Investigación autobiográfica; Aprendizaje del inglés; Motivación en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas; Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo.

Resumo

Este artigo contém a descrição de um projeto de pesquisa que se realizou com 26 estudantes de um programa de licenciatura em inglês de uma universidade pública em Bogotá, Colômbia. O propósito do estudo foi retratar as experiências dos estudantes como aprendizes de língua, seus sentimentos e pontos de vista ao respeito. A autobiografia foi o instrumento que se utilizou para coletar dados. Os resultados mostram que o processo de aprendizagem de língua tem uma forte influência do Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo. Também evidenciam a necessidade de criar um currículo de inglês mais amplo e incorporador, que leve em consideração o aprendido nas diferentes etapas da escola para evitar a repetição de conteúdos e propiciar uma aprendizagem mais motivadora.

Palavras chave: Autobiografia; Pesquisa autobiográfica; Aprendizagem do inglês; Motivação na Aprendizagem de Línguas; Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo

Introduction

As one of the requirements for the subject *Language, Society and Culture* in one B.Ed. program of English Teaching in a public university in Bogotá, the teacher-researcher asked her students to write autobiographies, as a reflective methodology to know the connections student-teachers made with the process of learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Colombian context. By reading these autobiographies, she observed that the student-teachers struggled to be able to understand the classes they receive mainly in English during the first semesters of the program. She also realized they made use of some specific strategies in order to overcome their difficulties. Therefore, she started to do research with the 26 students who were taking this subject during the first semester of 2015 to delve into their experiences as English learners and future teachers of English.

This article presents the purposes, method, theoretical framework and results of this research. The insights derived from this work might help teacher educators to understand how the students make sense of their experience as language learners and what needs to be done in order to be more effective English teachers not only at the university, but also in basic levels, namely primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, we would like to clarify that this article does not have a prescriptive intention whatsoever.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, we will define autobiography and autobiographical research in education. We will also illustrate how learning a language is influenced by socio-cultural factors and different forms of orientation in motivation. Finally, we will provide a brief description of the National Program of Bilingualism in Colombia.

Autobiography

Autobiography is one form of narrative among blogs, stories, journals, interviews essays and others. A narrative is a "recounting of things spatiotemporarilly distant" (Toolan, 2001, p.1). Distant refers to the tale and its topic, and also to the reader and teller. Narratives always include stories about people, their memories and reflections, the connections they make between their past and present and the sense they make out of their lived experiences. Autobiographies provide us with a great opportunity to see our actions and our journey through life under certain circumstances. In this particular case, the students had the chance to reflect on their experience as language learners in their Basic Education and at the Bachelor program. They enjoyed the writing

of this experience as it will be shown in the data analysis and the researcher was delighted to learn from their experiences.

An autobiography is "the story of the memory of oneself, one's history and its critical moments" (Hernández et al., 2011, p. 29). Gusdorff (1991) highlights the etymological components of the word autobiography which make it a complex concept. *Autos* refers to the identity, the consciousness of oneself and the principle of an autonomous existence, *Bios* affirms the vital continuity of that entity and its historical development; finally, *Graphe* introduces the technical means used to describe the development of that self. In the case of autobiography, the means is the written word.

Autobiography is one of the objects of study of autobiographical research. Being autobiography one of the objects of study of autobiographical research, we can define this type of research as the one that "explores the interweaving between language, thought and social practice. It examines how individuals integrate, structure, interpret spaces and temporalities of their historical and cultural contexts to examine, in that way, the process of construction of the subject (or group) in the dialectical interaction between social space and personal space through (the) language(s)" (Passeggi, 2011, p. 29).

Autobiographical research in education

Autobiographical research in education has been done through four waves. The first wave began in the early 70s in the USA and it was designated as autobiography and curriculum. This type of research focused on the analysis of the understandings and meanings of students in initial training. It included the reconstruction of autobiographical stories from the perspective of the curriculum as text and gender identity. The second wave embraced stories of experience and narrative (Grummet, 1988, 1991; Pagano, 1990). In this type of research, the researchers collected observations, diaries, conversations and documents that constitute narratives in order to reconstruct the experience that produces personal knowledge. In this wave there was an intense study of feminism. The third wave was related to collaborative autobiographies in which the researcher and the participants classified the autobiographies according to themes and patterns and made a report of their perspectives (Butt & Raymond, 1988) (Schubert & Ayers, 1992) (Goodson, 1998; Goodson & Cole, 1993). This process allowed the creation of a shared professional culture and identity.

Finally, we have the recent tendency to use narratives and stories in order to comprehend the history of education. This way has two trends. The first one includes personal stories examined only by the researcher and the second one

is focused on the life of the teachers that are examined by the teachers and the researcher. The research described in this article can be framed in the one that includes personal stories (the ones written by the students) and examined by the teacher researcher.

In Colombia some scholars such as Durán, Lastra & Morales (2013); and Villarreal, Muñoz & Perdomo (2016) have used autobiographies and narratives as a means to understand how people see life and construct meaning out of their experiences. In the first case, with college students and, in the second one, with students from 6th and 11th grades and their beliefs about the English classes. Other studies include the life stories of Colombian teachers, as it is the case of Clavijo's (2000) research.

The writing of an autobiography fosters a process of reflection that accounts for a better comprehension of the contexts and views of the world of the person who writes, which in turns reverts in a possible benefit as it gives voice to the voiceless and allows the implementation of changes and reforms based on the knowledge of the conditions narrated by the person who experiments the tensions and conflicts involved in living under certain circumstances.

The particular autobiographies analyzed in this project shed light on the needs of the students in their language learning process as well of the learning strategies they use in order to improve their language skills. The autobiographies also showed the tensions the future teachers go through and the different representations of the academic life. In this sense, this project might contribute to introduce some innovations in the English program of the major in which this study took place.

Motivation in language learning

According to Williams and Burden (1997), learning another language is different from learning any other subject. The learning of a foreign language implies more than just developing a set of skills, vocabulary and grammar; it entails "an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner" (p. 115).

Crookall and Oxford (1988) state that learning another language is "ultimately learning to be another social person" (p. 136). Gardner (1985) adds that "Languages are unlike any other subjects in that they involve the acquisition of skills and behavior patterns which are characteristic of another community" (p. 146). Consequently, learning a foreign language will be influenced by the attitudes towards the particular community of speakers of that language.

Language learning is also affected by the context and the culture in which learning takes place. In Colombia "speaking English has been deified as an asset in the sense that it only brings benefits to those who learn it, mainly as the access to a modern world characterized by technology, wider communication, economic power, scientific knowledge, and the like" (Maurais, 2003 as cited in Guerrero, 2010.). Thus, a concern that emerges in the Colombian context is to know what makes someone interested in learning English. So here, it is important to explain the difference between integrative and instrumental orientation in motivation (Gardner, 1985). An integrative orientation "occurs when the learner is studying a language because of a wish to identify with the culture of speakers of that language" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 116). An instrumental orientation describes a "group of factors concerned with motivation arising from external goals such as passing exams, financial rewards, furthering a career and gaining promotion" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 116). According to the results of this study, it could be interpreted that the students' orientation in their motivations seems to be instrumental as most of them reported to be interested in the English language as the means to obtain better job positions and be able to travel and achieve their goals.

The instrumentalization and usefulness orientation in motivation to learn English in the imagining of the students and their relatives might evidence the strong influence of the national policies "in times in which languages are stratified according to their instrumental value in the job market, and languages such as English gain a higher status based on the assumption that they provide better possibilities for employment and traveling" (Usma, 2009, p.132). Therefore, this study is focused on a cognitive approach to motivation which "is concerned with such issues as why people decide to act in certain ways and what factors influence the choices they make" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 119).

The National Program of Bilingualism

In 2005, the Ministry of Education released The National Program of Bilingualism in Colombia, a long-term policy that aimed "to make Colombian citizens bilingual in Spanish and English by 2019" (Usma, 2009, p. 128). This program was implemented focusing on five main areas, (1) developing standards for English teaching and learning; (2) evaluating communicative competence in students as well as in-service and pre-service teachers within and outside the formal school system; (3) providing professional development programs for teachers in order to develop their pedagogical knowledge as well as communicative competence in English; (4) supporting the use of new information and communication technologies for the teaching of English; and (5) consolidating bilingual and trilingual models in the different ethnic communities around the country (Cely, 2007).

The program designated the British Council as the leading implementation agency around the country, and Cambridge University Press would be in charge of testing teachers and students, as well as publishing the materials that would serve as a reference for the plan. This program was criticized by scholars in Colombia, who identified some flaws in its implementation such as the reduction of the term bilingualism to speaking English and Spanish, the processes of inclusion of the British Council and other international companies to support the program, and the exclusion of national universities and the instrumentalization of language learning among others.

As a way to mediate in the academic discussion, the Government changed the name of the National Program of Bilingualism into National English Program 2015-2025. The program "seeks students to use English as a tool to communicate with the world and improve their career opportunities strategy" (Presidencia de la República, 2014). This program is focused on three main areas: 1) Strategies for teacher training and teaching materials for primary and secondary education; 2) Quality, support and funding for higher education; and, 3) Coordination with the productive sector. Once again, the new program relies on the British Council and Cambridge as leading agencies to accompany the process.

The implementation of the National Program of Bilingualism brought the implementation of testing the English level of students and teachers and rose the demand for English teachers especially in Primary education where the teaching of this language should start. It also gave great relevance to the use of ICTs in education. The implementation of the Program did not take into account neither local needs nor the differences between rural and urban areas and private and state schools.

Although there is a good intention from the part of the government to make people able to speak another language, they did not consider other language possibilities and they adopted English as the only language worth learning. The government, as stated previously, did not take into account local needs and contexts and, in this way, "the uncritical adoption of bilingual models brings to light, as a consequence, that the good intention of giving everybody access to a language of power ends in an even more unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources" (Guerrero, 2010, p. 168). The students' autobiographies evidenced some of the flaws in the implementation of this program, being the most remarkable ones the unequal distribution of resources and the shortage of English teachers in primary schools. They also declared the big social difference between the English teaching in private institutions and the one offered by state schools, where the conditions are not the same, even when the National English Program has common objectives for all the levels of the educational system in Colombia.

Research Design

In this section, the context, participants, methodology, and data analysis of the research will be presented. The four categories derived from the data analysis are explained. These categories are entitled as (1) *My experience as a young learner of English*, (2) *Reasons for learning another language*, (3) *Making sense of my academic life*, and (4) *Visions of teaching*.

Context and participants

This study took place at a state university in Bogotá, Colombia. It was carried out with 26 sixth-semester students from a language teacher education program. The students took the subject called *Language, Society and Culture*. This subject was taught in a four-hour period a week, during 16 weeks in the first semester 2015. The students' age ranked between 20 and 25 years old. The participants volunteered to take part of the project and the type of work was piloted with a similar population in the two previous semesters. Language, Society and Culture belongs to the Disciplinary field of this Bachelor's Program and it is oriented to raise student teachers' awareness of the elements involved in language and their connections with society development and cultural views. Reflection is a key factor in this subject.

Aims, methodology and data collection instruments

The first aim of inquiry was to describe the language learning experiences of the student teachers and to characterize the main and most significant experiences they went through. In order to achieve these objectives, the narrative inquiry that entails "learning about the content of the experiences of the participants and their reflections" (Barkhuizen, 2013, p. 8) was used.

Narrative inquiry is also defined by Connelly and Clandinin as "the study of experience as story" (2006, p. 477). According to Barkhuizen (2013), these authors incite the researcher to go deeper in the context and the content of these stories in terms of temporality (the times in which experiences unfold), place (the places where the experiences are lived), and sociality (personal emotions, desires and interactions between people).

Incited by Connelly & Clandinin (2006), the content and the form of the students' autobiographies were analyzed and this analysis led to identify that their temporality was framed within the times of the implementation of the National Program of Bilingualism with all its vices. It was also noticeable in the autobiographies that the student teachers went through experiences in state and private institutions and that the latter offer them better opportunities

to learn the foreign language. Finally, it was read about their feelings when learning English, their dreams, and relationships between their classmates and language teachers, not only in their basic education, but also at the university.

In order to analyze the autobiographies, the theoretical framework and ideas of Riessman (2000), Hernández & Rifà (2011), and Barkhuizen (2013) were used. The main source of data was the autobiographies written by the students following some items based on questions about their English learning experience. An analysis of the structure and content of the autobiographies was carried out, but the emphasis was done on the latter.

Regarding the structure, it was found that most of the narratives started with an introductory paragraph, they continued describing the experiences with the English Language at school, family and college. Most of them finished with a description of future plans and some of the narratives had an abrupt end. The following section will describe the four categories of analysis.

Category 1: My experience as a young learner of English

As the student-teachers included their experience in Primary and Secondary School, this part of the narrative structure was called *My experience as a young learner of English*.

> "In Primary school I had one teacher who was in charge of all of the subjects. That teacher had little knowledge about English…when I was in secondary school, I had a good teacher in my English class" (C.G. 2015:1).

The experiences depicted by the students had in common that most of the times they had only one teacher in Primary school and that teacher was in charge of teaching all the subjects including English. Therefore, their experience in Primary was reduced to learning lists of vocabulary and one or two songs. Some of the students had a better experience in their secondary school and a few of them decided to study in a language institute in order to improve their language skills or to prepare themselves to be admitted in the university. Being private schools and institutes the places where students found better opportunities to improve their English might evidence that the conditions in which English is being taught and used in Colombia "puts the population which does not have the material, economic, or human resources to access the L2 at a disadvantage" (Guerrero, 2010, p. 176).

The fact that most of the students were taught English in Primary school by the homeroom teacher who was the teacher in charge of all of the subjects brings about the problem the national policies related to learning English has in common with other countries. In 1994, the Ministry of Education, in

its General Law of Education, introduced in Colombia "the need to learn at least one foreign language starting in elementary school" (Usma, 2009, p. 127). Nevertheless, this policy as it happened all around the world had some effects on the teaching and learning practices being the most remarkable "the shortage of primary school teachers with an English specialism. As a result, homeroom teachers, who may only speak limited English, are often required to take English lessons" (Copland & Garton, 2014, p. 225). This fact supports Quintero and Guerrero's (2013) claim that educational policies ignore, silence, and make teachers in general invisible as their opinions are not taken into account and they have to "find ways to make them (the policies) meaningful for their students in their particular context. This implies that sometimes they (the teachers) have to skip some of them (the policies) and adapt others; all this in order to, as they say, do the best for our students" (p. 202).

Category 2: Reasons for learning another language

When reading the narratives, one of the most interesting things was to discover the students' reasons for learning English. It could be noticed that their motivation was high and that it came from different sources, having some of them an instrumental orientation and external influences such as key people and events.

The cognitive concept of motivation, construed as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)" (William & Burden, 1997, p. 120), is the concept that frames this research. There was an emotional arousal in all the autobiographies derived from an instrumental orientation and external influences. This emotional arousal made the students invest not only money, but also intellectual and physical effort to learn the language. The following lines explain the external influences that boosted students' interest in English.

a. Perceived value of learning English

As stated in the theoretical framework, from a cognitive perspective "motivation is concerned with such issues as why people decide to act in certain ways and what factors influence the choices they make" (William & Burden, 1997, p. 119).

When the reason for performing an activity lies within the activity itself, we are talking about intrinsic motivation: "When the only reason for performing and activity is to gain something outside the activity itself, such as passing an exam, or obtaining financial rewards, the motivation is likely to be extrinsic" (William & Burden, 1997, p. 123).

The students involved in the project were sometimes intrinsically motivated and sometimes extrinsically. For instance, most of them showed preference for English and they invested time and effort. However, they were also interested because learning English represents social status and gain (better job opportunities, travelling and interacting with people from other cultures).

The sustained effort students made in learning English came from the fact that they gave a great value to the language in terms of what it represented in their long-term goals and life projects:

> "I have always liked traveling (sic), learning new things, new cultures and learn from the world above (sic). English is considered as the universal language, for that reason, I thought that learning languages could be necessary to accomplish my expectations" (A.C. 2015:1).

> "One day I was talking with my father and he told me that I had to study something that opens doors everywhere…" (M.G. 2015:1).

b. Curiosity

One of the major components of motivation is curiosity. Curiosity is inherent to human beings. The student teachers´ curiosity started when they heard new songs, came across books written in English and learned about new cultures:

> "I found some books of Meyer's Institute and looked at the images of London and some comics and I was interested because I did not understand anything so, I took a dictionary, some cassettes and tried to understand what those books were saying" (F.B. 2015:1).

c. Key people

The interest in the English language was also created by the influence of some relatives and teachers who not only made the students like the language, but also made them think about becoming an English teacher.

> "My sister in law was the person who influenced me in become a teacher (sic)" (p.3).

> "Teachers like him are persons who leave a mark in you and make you want to follow their lives and examples (sic)" (J.P.R. 2015:1).

d. Key events

There were also key events such as school performances and going to the movies that engaged students in the liking of English:

> "An important tradition at school was to prepare a big role play to present at Santo Tomas University and only the best students could participate

in it. So, I think that I did my best to belong to that "privileged group" (E.S. 2015:1).

"The only reason I had to learn English when I was a child was the fact that I wanted to understand movies language…" (F.R. 2015:1).

Category 3: Making sense of my academic life

According to Passegi (2011), one of the three principles that guide research on autobiographies is the construction of reality. This is the moment in which the writer links past and present and how this link has made him or her what he or she is now. The autobiographies showed positive and negative experiences that influence the students' decisions to continue improving their language learning. In the process of overcoming the difficulties when learning English, students become agents of their own language learning process.

"I think that the best experience I have ever had in (the B.Ed. program), was in first semester, the English teacher I had at that stage was simply amazing, and I learnt a lot from him. He made me feel sure about this career, and about being an English teacher. Clearly, that experience, made me continue in the program" (S.B. 2015:1).

Students' academic life was permeated by some tensions that had mainly to do with abrupt changes from one teaching style to another. Some students were highly motivated by the English teachers they had in primary and then they found that their secondary English teachers were absolutely different. The same was true for the university experience. Some of the students stated that the teachers at the university do not take into account students' needs:

"This experience has been very different at the university because… (teachers do not) do activities according to our needs" (L.R. 2015:1).

There is a mismatch between what their teachers at the university preach and what they do in class:

"Talking about my experiences at the University on the […] program I have to say that most of the English teachers are focused on theories and sometimes they do not encourage students to learn English as a whole" (F.B. 2015:1).

"Sometimes teachers do not help enough…" (A.C. 2015:1).

Besides the aspects mentioned above, students see the university as a world of dichotomies; some classmates are selfish, some others cooperate:

"When I started my degree, I was so confused because I really loved English…but the subjects (sic) did not make me feel good, the people

were arrogant and I never received help from anyone so I started failing and delayed (sic) one semester" (D.H. 2015:1).

Academic life is full of challenges. Students have to perform some activities in English even at early stages of the B.Ed. program, when they do not feel confident enough to do so, and sometimes they feel at a disadvantage towards their peers. These situations create tensions and force the students to search a way through to overcome limitations:

"My English classes were awful, and sad sometimes, because I could not understand a lot of things…" (E.A. 2015:2).

"Many of my classmates had a good level …so I felt very shy and ashamed to speak" (J.R. 2015:1).

Students become agents of the B.Ed. program as they undergo some aspects of the university within certain dichotomies such as good and bad teachers, good and bad experiences. However, they are also agents as they find ways to overcome the problems.

"I had a terrible teacher, so I realized that it is too important the autonomous work. That's why I started to improve by myself, watching movies, reading books, looking for free English courses online, talking to native English speakers in chat rooms, and so on" (C.S. 2015:2).

They also read or look for alternative ways to practice English, such as English Clubs or groups of people who join foreigners in places for this purpose. The interest of some students is also focused on culture:

"I like to read newspaper articles […] There are also some places in Bogotá where you have the opportunity to speak with native speakers, depending of your level (sic) and that's a good tool because is the closest chance that you have to know about English people and their culture" (D.N. 2015:2).

To sum up, students look for different ways to face all the challenges of their academic life and succeed. We could say that they do a lot with English outside the classroom and they are autonomous, definitely agents of their own learning process.

Category 4: Visions of teaching

As the participants are student-teachers of English, it was important to analyze their visions as future teachers. They still have a romantic view of teaching and they foresee themselves as humanistic teachers that will improve education and change the world. For them, it is paramount to teach another

language as a way to help people. One of the most important points to highlight is that they want to continue their preparation with further studies:

> "A teacher is someone who helps people, who teaches, who listens, who understands, and who loves the profession and obviously is a person who changes the world" (J.A. 2015:2).
>
> "I would like to discover all the stories behind every student and use that in a future to analyze the best way to teach them" (S.H. 2015:2).
>
> "In the future I see myself as teacher researcher" (F.B. 2015:2).

It is important to highlight that students' visions of the teacher have a lot to do with the pedagogical and humanistic aspects. Students recognize teaching as a profession and some of them are clear about having a role as teacher researchers as well. Teacher development is an ongoing process that makes part of their life project.

Conclusions and implications

The main purposes that guided this project were to describe the language learning experiences of the student-teachers and to characterize the main and most significant experiences they went through. We described the English language learners' experiences in terms of four categories entitled as follows: *My experience as a young learner of English*, *Reasons for learning another language*, *Making sense of my academic life*, and *Visions of teaching*.

The experiences depicted by the future teachers showed a strong influence of the National Program of Bilingualism with all its flaws, especially the fact that English was adopted as the main foreign language to be taught and learnt giving this language a status "even higher than the mother tongue in Colombia" (Guerrero, 2010). Thus, the participants' narratives portrayed interesting insights about the way global and local factors are affecting English learning and teaching in Colombia.

The global policies about learning English from an early stage derived from the market have reached our country and have had an impact on our Primary and Preschool programs. We could see from the autobiographies that they depict "A widely reported problem…the gap between the supply of qualified TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) teachers and the demand for them as programs expand…" (Enever & Moon, 2009, p. 10). The lack of qualified teachers means that countries frequently have to rely on teachers "who are not trained to teach TEYL, including Primary class teachers and others who might not have qualifications appropriate for teaching younger children" (Enever & Moon, 2009, p. 10).

Most of the students claimed to have been taught English in Primary school by teachers who were not prepared to do so, and therefore they were requested to learn long lists of vocabulary or do translations. They also stated that these classes were mainly taught by their homeroom teacher who was in charge of all of the subjects. This might show how the policies on learning English whose implementation started in our country in 2005 with the National Program of Bilingualism did not supply sufficient qualified language teachers in Primary schools and how the teachers faced this problem trying to do what was best for their students. It also shows that these policies were top-down and did not take into account local needs and contexts.

In the second category, namely reasons for learning another language, we can see the instrumentalization of language learning (Usma, 2009) as the main reason to learn English. The students perceived the value of this language as the means to travel and get better job opportunities which turns English into "an instrumental tool to be "competitive" in the job market and the "knowledge based economy" (Usma, 2009, p. 133). According to Usma, the instrumentalization of language learning is one of the effects of the international policies adopted by Colombia in the National Program of Bilingualism.

At the university, the students found that they were not progressing in their learning of the English as a foreign language, as the information they receive does not seem to have continuity. This might evidence the need to establish "a cohesive curriculum outline in foreign languages, ensuring a cumulative program of provision for each phase of schooling" (Enever & Moon, 2009, p. 12).

The student teachers feel their English teachers' discourse is not coherent to what they do in class and that they should make their classes more interesting and focused on students' interests. Although students reported to do a lot of autonomous work mainly by using the ICTs (chats, television, network), they still acknowledge the need for a teacher who accompanies their process and helps them with some tutoring more than one who makes a lot of use of ICTs in class. Teacher who helps, understands them and foremost loves his or her profession.

The previous paragraphs probably describe the most interesting finding which has to do with what the student teachers expect from their language teachers. Student teachers did not claim for a teacher using new technologies in class. They look for a teacher who is aware of what they already know, their needs and interests and someone who is a more like a councilor to their difficulties.

We wanted to highlight the use of the ICTs and the students' image of a good teacher because ICTs are also part of the global policies in education and the nowadays called Plan Nacional de Inglés (National English Plan). The

use of ICTs is mandatory as one of the resources that should be implemented in class. This aspect needs revision as focusing too much in the ICTs as the only means to engage students in tasks related to learning languages, so this might lead to a distorted view of teaching and learning. Looking for fun activities and getting to know our students better can lead them to progress as well. By stating this, we do not mean we should exclude ICTs as part of our practice as language teachers, what we would like to emphasize is that there are other alternatives being the most important carrying out needs analysis in order to know what our students already bring, need to learn and how they learn. Therefore, the use of the ICTs and the new environments for learning should be evaluated in terms of "an understanding of the extent to which they enhance the learning experience" (Enever & Moon, 2009, p. 11.)

It was interesting to note that the visions of teaching pre-service teachers have, has to do with providing useful learning experiences and be able to match their students' needs. Only two students out of the 26 envision themselves as a teacher researcher and all of them established being a teacher as part of their life project. On a more personal note, we would like to add that by reading these narratives we got to know our students better. It was easier to understand the way they behave in the classroom and, of course, it made us feel more connected with them.

Finally, it is important to state that the findings of this project might shed a light on some of the effects of the National Program of Bilingualism. As for the B.Ed. program, where this study took place, it would be interesting to consider an evaluation of the English syllabus offered, in terms of the continuity suggested by the results. This evaluation could be extended to primary and secondary levels of education, where the students also mentioned have been exposed to overlapping of topics that led to a loss of interest in the English classes.

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Break the Negative Feedback Chains: Future Teachers Speak Up![1]

Romper las cadenas de retroalimentación negativa: ¡Los futuros docentes hablan!

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Abstract:

This study examines future teachers' theoretical reflections on Critical Incidents and how these link to Costa Rica's English teaching system. Participants included 30 senior college students from an English teaching program. Using narrative research techniques, the authors have concluded that: (1) spaces for reflection must be created in EFL so that students' voices are heard; (2) both instruction and assessment need to be tackled not from the native speaker angle but from the learner language perspective; and (3) because mistakes are both inherent to foreign language learning and an indicator of language development, more tolerance to learner errors needs to be exercised. The study proves relevant for language pedagogy and Applied Linguistics (AL) since it paves the way for further research, opens room for reflection and dialogue, and enhances our understanding of the issue at stake from a future-teacher standpoint.

Keywords: critical incidents; reflective writing; future English teachers; professional identity; negative feedback

Resumen:

Se evalúan las reflexiones teóricas de futuros profesores sobre incidentes críticos y su relación con la actualidad del sistema educativo costarricense. Los participantes fueron 30 estudiantes avanzados de una carrera en la enseñanza del inglés en Costa Rica. Con base en técnicas de investigación narrativa, se desvelan tres hallazgos principales: (1) es necesario crear espacios de reflexión en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera a fin de considerar las voces de los estudiantes; (2) más allá de la perspectiva nativo-hablante, es preciso abordar la docencia y la evaluación desde la perspectiva del estudiante y (3)

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dado que los errores son inherentes al aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera y además indicadores de desarrollo lingüístico, es vital que los docentes ejerzan mayor tolerancia en torno a este caso. La investigación es relevante para el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas y la Lingüística Aplicada dado su potencial de generar futuras investigaciones, abrir espacios de reflexión y dialogo y facilitar una mejor comprensión del tema en cuestión desde la perspectiva de futuros docentes.

Palabras clave: incidentes críticos; escritura reflexiva; futuros docentes de inglés; identidad profesional; retroalimentación negativa

Resumo

Avaliam-se as reflexões teóricas de futuros professores sobre incidentes críticos e a sua relação com a atualidade do sistema educativo costarriquense. Os participantes foram 30 estudantes avançados de uma carreira no ensino do inglês na Costa Rica. Com base em técnicas de pesquisa narrativa, revelam três descobertas principais: (1) é necessário criar espaços de reflexão na aula de inglês como língua estrangeira com o fim de considerar as vozes dos estudantes; (2) mais além da perspectiva nativo-falante, é preciso abordar a docência e a avaliação desde a perspectiva do estudante e (3) dado que os erros são inerentes à aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira, e além de indicadores de desenvolvimento linguístico, é vital que os docentes exerçam maior tolerância em torno a este caso. A investigação é relevante para o campo do ensino de línguas e a Linguística Aplicada, dado o seu potencial de gerar futuras pesquisas, abrir espaços de reflexão e diálogo e facilitar uma melhor compreensão do tema em questão desde a perspectiva de futuros docentes.

Palavras clave: incidentes críticos; escritura reflexiva; futuros docentes de inglês; identidade profissional; retroalimentação negativa

Introduction

The current paper follows up on Sevilla and Gamboa's 2017 study of critical incidents (CIs) and the configuration of future teacher's professional identities. In such paper, the authors aimed to "unveil the role that critical incidents and reflective writing play in the configuration of future EFL teachers' professional identities" (p. 233). The informants included 30 college students majoring in English teaching at the University of Costa Rica, who wrote and reflected on critical incidents that molded their English learning and teaching experiences. The researchers followed Freeman's (1998) four-stage process for data analysis and interpretation in the analysis of the results and arrived at three conclusions: "(1) spaces for reflection should be opened so that positive practices are kept and the negative can be dismantled, (2) reflective writing through critical incidents is an effective way to realize professional and other social identities, and (3) reflective writing through critical incidents is a bridge through which dialogue can be initiated amongst all educational actors (p. 233).

Thus, while the first investigation suggested examining the participants' own theoretical analysis of their CIs in order to understand the complexities underlying these configurations, the present study attends to such recommendation by examining these future teachers' theoretical reflections on their CIs and how they link to Costa Rica's current educational system. The study adopted a narrative research approach and used several validation measures to ensure credibility of findings (see methodology section).

Like the first study of 2017, this research was contextualized in a Comparative Linguistics (CL) course from an English teaching major (ETM) at the University of Costa Rica. The course examined the differences and similarities between the students' L1 (Spanish) and L2 (English) and how these could be used to prevent and deal with errors in English language teaching. Using reflective writing as a pedagogical tool, the course created a space for introspection into both, the participants' English learning experiences and their teaching practices since the majority were taking a teaching practicum by the time the study was run.

In this context, reflective writing as a means to prompt learning became paramount to the completion of the study. Sevilla and Gamboa (2017), echoing Ramsay, Barker, and Jones, 1999; Cisero, 2006; Mlynarczyk, 2006; Farrell, 2008; Khandelwal, 2009; Gorlewsk and Greene, 2011; Ryan 2011; Farrell, 2013; Purcell, 2013; Chang and Lin, 2014; Rutherford, Flin and Irwin, 2015; Walker, 2015; Schulz, Krautheim, Hackemann, Kreuzer, Kochs and Wagner, 2016; Kalman, Aulls, Rohar, and Godley, 2008 claimed that CIs and reflective writing have awakened an unprecedented interest as a way to aid language

education. Hence, studies like the present one offer an opportunity to understand the students' own contemplations of their language learning journey.

Overall, this second paper makes several noteworthy contributions to the field of study and policy and decision-making in related instructional settings. In the forthcoming sections we present a review of relevant studies on critical incident analysis (henceforth, CIA) and reflective writing, the methodological framework, the data analysis and interpretation, and the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Literature Review

To contextualize the study theoretically, this section outlines major studies on CIA and reflective writing and their applications to learning. The review is presented chronologically and includes research from various geographical locations and study areas.

Currently, CIA is conceived as a valuable qualitative research technique not only in language learning and teaching-related studies but also in other fields such as teacher education (Morey, Nakazawa & Colving, 1997; Graham, 1997), sign language learning (Lang, Foster, Gustina, Mowl & Liu, 1996), and medicine (Schulz, Krautheim, Hackemann, Kreuzer, Kochs & Wagner, 2016; Rutherford, Flin & Irwin, 2015). First prioneered in industrial psychology by John C. Flanagan (Corbally, 1956, p. 57), CIA today is at the core of educational research and practice, as we will briefly show in the lines ahead.

In 1999, Ramsay, Barker and Jones used critical incidents elicited through interviews to examine the academic adjustment and learning processes of international and local first-year students. Twenty local and international students reported positive and negative critical incidents which helped or hindered their learning during the first year. The researchers were able to consider the impact of particular teaching processes and discuss implications of teaching and learning in the first year. More recently in 2008, Farrell conducted a study in Singapore where he had eighteen trainee teachers in an English language teacher education course reflect on critical incidents that took place while teaching. The author concluded that CIA proved useful for trainee teachers. However, he warns that language educators should be aware that classification of such incidents into neat categories can be problematic and that critical incident tasks should be assigned carefully. All in all, Farrell concluded that if trainee teachers reflect on critical incidents that occur during class it is possible for them to unveil new understandings of the teaching and learning process.

Along the same lines, Khandelwal conducted a study in 2009 to identify teaching behaviors that differentiate excellent and very poor performance of

undergraduate college teachers in India using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) from the students' perspective. Two hundred thirty-seven critical incidents from sixty female students from three different undergraduate humanities courses at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi, were collected and analyzed qualitatively. Through the study it was possible to identify specific behaviors that faculty members can follow to yield improvement in teaching evaluations by students. It was also concluded that a list of critical behaviors may have implications in selection, training and performance evaluation of teachers. Finally, the researcher argues that the study underlines the robustness of the CIT in educational research.

Farrell (2013) carried out a study on "critical incident analysis that an ESL teacher in Canada revealed to her critical friend and how both used McCabe's (2002) narrative framework for analyzing an important critical incident that occurred in the teacher's class" (p. 79). The researcher concluded that teachers can impose order in their practices by analyzing critical incidents which can help develop the habit of engaging in reflective practice. Following this study, Walker (2015) used the CIT to assess ESL student satisfaction. He had 23 ESL students from a university English language center in Canada write about critical incidents that made them very satisfied and very dissatisfied with the service they were receiving from the center. He was able to draw conclusions regarding procedural, analytical, and student response issues with the CIT. The outcomes of his study "supported the view that information obtained through the CIT could assist ESL managers and teachers in developing and enhancing quality factors that more accurately reflect student expectations of the service" (Walker, 2015, p. 95). He goes on to claim that the CIT is a valuable tool to build understanding of this kind of issues since it is an explanatory methodology with potential to increase knowledge about previously unknown phenomena.

As for reflective writing, research has vindicated its value to prompt learning in a wide range of professional fields including –besides language instruction— the political sciences (Josefson, 2005), sociology teaching (Purcell, 2013), the teaching of science (Eiriksson, 1997), and biology (Balgopal and Montplaisir, 2011), to mention a few. Over and above this, reflective writing has been understood as a means to fostering permanent learning (Ryan, 2011, p. 99).

Along these lines, Cisero (2006) has studied "whether a reflective journal writing assignment would improve students' course performance" (p. 231). This research involved 166 students who completed the task (experimental group) and 317 students who did not (comparison group). The inquiry reveled that reflective journal writing may benefit the average student but not the good nor the struggling students. The author argues that "journal writing can only be effective in improving course performance if students make an effort to engage in reflective thinking, thereby making learning more meaningful" (p. 233).

In the same year, Mlynarczyk (2006) ran a qualitative investigation that involved reflective journal writing in a four-year college in the U.S. Drawing from conclusions in her study, she argued that "all students- and especially basic writers- need to reflect on their reading using personal, expressive language in order to acquire genuine academic discourse" (p. 4). Two years later, Kalman, Aulls, Rohar and Godley explored how reflective writing was perceived and accomplished by a group of students in a physics course in Canada. Broadly, they concluded that "students understood that engaging in reflective writing enabled them to determine when they did not understand a concept as it was being read and that reflective writing promoted self-dialogue between the learner's prior knowledge and new concepts in the textbook" (2008, p. 74).

In 2011, Gorlewsk and Greene implemented a mixed-method action research using reflective writing as a vehicle to help students improve their writing skills in Georgia school. The authors argue that "structured opportunities for reflective writing allow students to polish their writings and to reflect actively on their written creations, while encouraging clearer and more honest writing products. They claim that reflective writing can transform students as they begin to incorporate metacognition, or thinking about their thinking, into their writing processes, as they simultaneously learn the curriculum" (p. 90). At a more general level, Chang and Lin (2014) studied the effects of reflective learning e-journals and how students used them to aid learning in an EFL college course using an experimental study design. Ninety-eight undergraduate students participated. The results suggest that students who used reflective learning e-journals outperformed students who did not in reading comprehension. It was also reported that students who used reflective learning e-journals improved their performance in an online course as well as their writing abilities.

So far, these are a few of the many studies that have used CIA and reflective writing to prompt and investigate learning in several areas of expertise. Although our review is by no means exhaustive, it helps frame our inquiry theoretically, and it invites the reader to delve into the full volume of literature on the subject.

Methodology

This section describes the methodological framework for data collection and the data analysis and interpretation that resulted from it. Following this, we present the data analysis and interpretation.

This investigation is based on narrative research, a methodology first adopted by disciplines such as literature, history and film, and then developed more strongly in education from the need to study "teacher reflection, teacher

research, action research, and self-study […]", as well as from a growing focus on "empowering teachers by giving them voices in the educational research process […]" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 384). In brief, narrative research uses a number of techniques such as "autobiographies, biographies, life writing, personal accounts, personal narratives, narrative interviews, […] ethnobiographies, autoethnographies", and many others (ibid, p. 387). The current research is based mainly on autobiographical and biographical data produced by theoretical analyses of the CIs reported in Sevilla and Gamboa's 2017 study (cf. introduction of this paper).

Fieldwork was conducted from March through July 2015 and included 30 senior students enrolled in the ETM described previously in the introduction section. Participants came from mixed socio-economic backgrounds and had GPA scores ranging from 6 to 9.52 on a 1-10 scoring scale. The researchers used a chart of citing codes to safeguard student identity (see data analysis and interpretation section ahead).

Data were gathered from theoretical analyses of CIs previously narrated by the participants, and the articulation of such analysis in the light of Costa Rica's current public education system. Informants were thus able to tackle their own autobiographical accounts from a critical perspective using theoretical backup and the larger educational setting as a guide. Once data were collected, the researchers used the following data analysis and interpretation strategies suggested by Gay, Mills, and Airasian: (1) identifying possible themes from the data sets, (2) coding qualitative data, (3) finding interrelations amongst the codes, and (4) displaying findings (2009, p. 449).

Research validity was accomplished via three procedures. The researchers first conducted calibration sessions to agree on the major themes from the raw data. They then followed criteria established by Dey (1993) to counterbalance threats to validity. Such criteria included questions such as *how reliable are those providing the data? What motivations may have influenced the participants' report? What biases may have influenced how observation was made and reported?* (as cited by Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 457). Lastly, participants were asked to read the reconstructions of their analyses to validate the investigators' accuracy in their analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section looks into the data coming from the three major categories that emerged from the participants' theoretical analysis. Due to length limitations, the analysis will focus on the most recurrent themes only, leaving further details for future investigations. With the purpose of aiding clarity, we used citation codes throughout the section, as depicted in table 1 below.

Table 1. Raw Data Citation Codes

Instrument Type	Data Source	Citing Code
Theoretical Analyses	ETM Students	TA- P01-030

Source: Researchers' own design

The Monolingual Perspective of Instruction and Assessment

For many decades, the language classroom has worked under the maxim that students' second language (L2) proficiency should be assessed against the standards of a target first language (L1). In recent academic discussions, this view has been referred to as *the monolingual perspective*—or bias— and has sparked considerable theoretical attention and criticism (see May, 2014; Fallas and Dillard, 2015; and Fallas, 2016). These theoretical developments, fortified by the ever-growing consolidation of Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL), are challenging the long-held monolingual view of language instruction and assessment and allowing for alternative ways to conceive theory and practice. In the data sources we examined, a great area of the students' analysis revolved around this very subject. After a review on Ferris' description of global and local errors (2013, p. 88), P11 and P12 make the following claim:

> The problem we find with this is that at all times we were being measured from the angle of the native-like scale. Even today, we understand errors are being assessed in such a way that students are expected to produce the target language as if they were native speakers of the new language. In other words, L2 learning must duplicate the target language to its fullest rather than to be a means for communication. In our narratives, the locus of attention was never communication given that the relevance of errors laid in a local level. As students of English and soon-to-be teachers, we do not think students should be measured in relation to how much they approximate to a native speaker because we are not dealing with simultaneous bilinguals, but emerging bilinguals at best (TA-P11 and TA-P12, sic).

Strikingly, much of what these participants are saying coincides with what Fallas would argue in his 2016 paper—about one year following the students' theoretical analyses. Certainly, this goes without saying that the students had the upper hand in the discussion, but it is an exceptional fact that both participants and the scholar were synchronized over a subject that even today may seem so alien to many EFL researchers. Later on in their analysis, these same participants bring this statement forward:

> English teachers should avoid measuring students with a native-like scale. Corder (1971) describes the notion of language transfer when features of the L1 are present in the L2. It is only natural to find language transfer in the Costa Rican EFL context. Thus, the focus of feedback should be on getting the message across rather than torturing students with native-like pronunciation or intonation at early stages. (TA-P11 and TA-P12, sic).

The students conclude their discussion by highlighting that "student's voices need to be heard. They need the experience the satisfaction of being listened to as people with opinions, feelings, and experience", and that the reflection space offered through this research was a rewarding enterprise: "We appreciate the space created for us to reflect upon these matters for we have no only fund the way to overcome the Achilles Hill in writing but also we have enjoyed the ride in the English Roller Coaster" (TA-P11 and TA-P12, sic).

The Need to Tolerate Errors

As early as 1990, authors such as Lightbown and Spada argued that the change from a focus on form to an emphasis on the communication and understanding of meaning through language has resulted in a greater tolerance for error in learner's speech. This has led many language teachers to an understanding that language accuracy might very well be sacrificed as a tradeoff for communicability. Such an assertion matches participant 06's reflection, which reads:

> […] mistakes are an essential part of the processes behind learning a second language, and therefore mistaking really makes us realize that our knowledge is being fostered and improved. […], we, as future teachers of a foreign language, should encourage motivate learners to use the language and to get acquainted with it. Also, we ought to avoid temptation of correcting everything we might find wrong in a student's utterance; rather try to enhance his/her fluency while speaking by improving their desire to say what s/he would like to say" (TA-P06, sic).

This implies that not only is P06 quite aware that mistakes are an indicator that learning is taking place, but also that it is a teacher's responsibility to account for that in their teaching practice. From this same informant, we later on get the perspective that mistakes are not only part of the language learning process, but more broadly part of our human nature: "Carl James in his book 'Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis', states that errors are unique to humans, as we are not only *sapiens* but also *homo errans"* (TA-P06, sic). He adds that committing errors, in Carl James' view, is "the very pinnacle of human uniqueness (James, 1998, P.1)", and that it is even more so in the specific context of language learning (TA-P06). His own implicit

remark on the need to tolerate errors surfaces when he explains: "Because I never did well in English in high-school, I was forced to start from scratch at the university, and this set off challenged me to try and fail a zillion times" (ibid, sic).

Nonetheless these claims, this participant clarifies that as normal as mistakes can be, teachers must not get to the extreme of ignoring them altogether. He cites Tebbit's 1985 argument on the dangers of extreme tolerance towards mistakes:

> We've allowed so many standards to slip... Teachers weren't bothering to teach kids to spell and to punctuate properly... If you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is no better than bad English, where people turn up filthy... at school... All those things tend to cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime (Tebbitt, 1985). (TA-P06, sic)

He winds up his theoretical analysis by highlighting the importance of appropriate feedback methods for effective language learning: "The professors' role is to guide, encourage, help and engage the learners' attempts to using a target language, not to discourage them by insulting or pushing their performance into a hurry, consequently, making mistakes" (TA-P6, sic).

The Need for Better Corrective Feedback Methods

The notion of corrective feedback has been the subject of study for many years now. Abaya (2014) argues that this tendency was significantly propelled by "Hendrickson's study of 1978 in which he questioned if errors should be corrected and if so which ones, when and how errors should be corrected." (p. 5). She goes on to argue that "corrective feedback remains one of the contentious issues in second language teaching and that there is no consensus in its application" (p. 5). Arguably, corrective feedback is an inherent part of second and foreign language pedagogy that is highly influenced by teachers' beliefs, which often conflict with learners' perspectives (ibid). This issue was eloquently illustrated by P24 and P25 assertions:

However, as Ramírez (2007) explains that, "sometimes [...] teachers are not familiar with the most appropriate way in which they should correct students in order not to affect their motivation to participate" (p. 106). The teacher's lack of expertise in creating the right environment in terms of error correction is a crucial matter that might impact the learning of a second language. In Costa Rica, for example, teachers have been wrongly taught that the best way to correct students is by pointing errors immediately, with no reflection on the way the feedback is given and taken by students (Ramírez, 2007) (TA-P24 and TA-P25, sic).

Along the same lines, P05 states:

> In my opinion there should be a general knowledge from educators about key aspects in error corrections, in order for them to take them into consideration when teaching. One of my recommendations is to respect all your students as you want them to respect you; equality is one of the best values that should always prevail (TA-P05, sic).

From this perspective, the need for better corrective feedback leans toward both, technical expertise on the subject and affective considerations as well. Instinctively perhaps, he is aware that practical knowledge in isolation does not suffice in gearing corrective feedback in the right direction and acknowledges the place of the psycho-affective domain in the issue at stake. This is again reinforced by P24 and P25 when they argue: "the process of correct errors can affect students emotionally, hence their ability to speak a foreign language […] the harsh way professors gave us feedback, made us not wanting to have an active role in classes anymore (TA-P24 and CI-P25, sic).

In an analysis of the role of competence (what a student knows) and performance (the way competence is demonstrated) in teachers' choice of corrective feedback, P20 and P21 make the following point:

> One of the most commonly held assumptions by students and teachers alike is that competence and performance are the same. Thus, when a student is performing, teachers usually pay more attention than necessary to grammar mistakes, intonation, and self-confidence (TA- P20 and TA-P21).

These participants further explain that when teachers do not differentiate between these constructs, the result is a tendency to overemphasize isolated errors and ignore the full wealth of knowledge (competence) a student has: "Some professors and students think that just because of an isolated mistake, the learner is not capable of learning the language" (ibid). They warn that the outcome of this lack of knowledge is twofold: It undermines the significance of the psycho-emotional domain of the learner on the one hand, and it leads to academic frustration on the other (compare Sevilla and Gamboa, 2017, for expansion on this). Upon concluding their analysis, these two participants highlight the need to deter academic frustration and tensions caused by faulty corrective feedback: "As future English teachers, it is essential to break the pattern of academic frustration caused by inadequate teaching techniques and tense class atmosphere. An educator has to encourage students not only to learn but also to respect others" (ibid).

Conclusions

As stated earlier in this paper, our study purported to examine future teachers' theoretical reflections on their CIs and how they link to our current educational system. Upon its completion, we have arrived at the following major conclusions: First, spaces for reflection need to be created within the EFL classroom so that students' voices are heard. Second, both instruction and assessment need to be tackled not so much from the native speaker angle but rather from the learner language perspective. Third, because mistakes are both, inherent to foreign language learning and an indicator of language development, more tolerance to learner errors need to be exercised on the part of language teachers. Therefore, language instructors should inform their teaching and assessment practices by such principles. Last, teachers need to be well trained in the field of corrective feedback so that they foster language learning rather than disappointment and demotivation.

Even though findings yield solid conclusions, there are limitations which need to be acknowledged and dealt with in further research. Our study was limited to a small sample population and thus findings can only account for what was done within the constraints of it, which implies that results cannot be transferred to other settings. Additionally, the realms of corrective feedback are a double-face coin, with the learners' views on one side and those of the teachers on the other. Further research needs to be done in the same context considering the teachers' voices to capture the perspectives of current instructors on the issue. The scope and depth of the study stands as our last limitation, which restricts generalizability. Only further research will prove whether and to what degree our findings are true for all contexts.

In terms of implications, findings help bridge knowledge gaps from Gamboa and Sevilla's 2017 paper on critical incidents, reflective writing, and future teachers' professional identities. Despite their exploratory nature, the methods from our two papers could be adopted in other language programs and used as a basis for best practices and policy making. We coincide with Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) claim that qualitative inquiries can often assist moderate generalizations and suggest courses of action to benefit the individuals involved. After all, it is the voices of future teachers that speak up from the current inquiry. Failing to listen to these claims is, we presume, a luxury no responsible ELT program would want to afford.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Instructions for the Critical Incident Analysis

Objective: *to write a solid analysis of the relationships between your critical incidents and: (1) the professional literature on the field of Contrastive Linguistics and (b) the interpretation of the incidents in the context of English teaching in Costa Rica.*

Instructions: Now that you're done with the narration of your critical incident, time has come for you to do the academic work. Consider (some of) the following elements:

- *a theoretical discussion of your incident using* ***at least five academic sources (very important, not optional)***
- *the significance of the incidents for you as English learners,*
- *some assumptions about language that have been challenged or reinforced upon experiencing the incident,*
- *what you will do if you are faced with a similar situation in the future,*
- *how the two incidents interrelate with each other* ***(very important, not optional)****, and*
- *an interpretation of the incidents in light of the teaching of English in Costa Rica* ***(very important, not optional)****.*

NOTES:

- If you are working in pairs, remember to find relationships between the two incidents.
- Follow the article by Sevilla in order to help you articulate the theoretical discussion of your incidents.
- Start thinking about your conclusions, which basically are a proposal in order to deal with these incidents in the teaching-learning setting.

Designed for IO-5320, Contrastive Linguistics (April 2015)

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Letter

University of Costa Rica
Western Branch
Department of Philosophy and Arts

Dear student/participant:

This is a request for consent to participate in a research study. In so doing, the researchers seek to systematize your analysis of the critical incidents you wrote for the course IO-5320 Contrastive Linguistics. The general goal of the study is to study your theoretical analyses and how they connect to our current public education system. In order to ensure anonymity, the researchers will preserve your confidentiality by means of the following:

- Assigning code names or numbers for participants so that their real identities are kept anonymous.
- *Keeping data sources in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researchers.*
- *Sharing a copy of the final manuscript before it is sent for publication upon request.*

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this letter of consent. After you sign the letter, you are still free to withdraw, and this will not affect the relationship you have with the professors-researchers.

It is our hope to use the results of this research to publish at least one article on the subject. Feel free to contact us in person or via e-mail at henrysevilla@gmail.com; gamboa.roy@gmail.com if you have any more questions regarding this research.

Yours, truly,

_____
M.A. Henry Sevilla Morales
Researcher

_____
Mag. Roy Gamboa Mena
Researcher

_____
Participant's Name (please also sign above):

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An English for Research Publication Purposes Course: Gains, Challenges, and Perceptions[1]

Un curso de inglés para propósitos de publicación de investigación: avances, desafíos y percepciones

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Abstract

Academic writing for scholars wanting to publish in English has gained considerable research attention in writing circles. This article reports the findings of a case study on the gains, challenges, and perceptions about writing in English that a group of scholars had while taking an academic writing course. Two questionnaires, an in-depth interview, and a teacher-researcher's journal were used for data collection. The findings emphasize gains emerging from genre-based pedagogy as a holistic approach to academic writing and usefulness of teaching strategies for writing. The study reports time, discipline, and language proficiency as challenges to overcome. Finally, the participants report differing views towards peer feedback and a predominantly positive perception of English as the language for scientific writing.

Keywords: Academic writing; English for research publication purposes; genre-based teaching; strategies for writing; peer feedback

Resumen

Existe un claro interés relacionado con la escritura académica en inglés para propósitos investigativos. Este estudio de caso caracteriza los logros, retos, y percepciones sobre escritura en inglés que un grupo de profesores investigadores tuvieron durante el desarrollo de un curso de escritura académica. Dos cuestionarios, una entrevista y un diario de campo del investigador se usaron para recoger datos. Los hallazgos sugieren

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que la pedagogía basada en el género escrito es un enfoque holístico para aprender sobre escritura académica. Además, generan evidencia sobre lo útil que pueden ser las estrategias de escritura. El estudio también indica que el tiempo, la disciplina y la suficiencia lingüística representan retos para los participantes. Finalmente, los participantes expresan contrastes sobre la evaluación de pares y una percepción predominantemente positiva del inglés como el idioma para la escritura científica.

Palabras clave: Escritura académica; enseñanza basada en el género textual; estrategias para la escritura; inglés para propósitos de publicación investigativa; evaluación de pares.

Resumo

Existe um claro interesse relacionado com a escritura acadêmica em inglês para propósitos investigativos. Este estudo de caso caracteriza os aproveitamentos, desafios, e percepções sobre escritura em inglês que um grupo de professores pesquisadores teve durante o desenvolvimento de um curso de escritura académica. Dois questionários, uma entrevista e um diário de campo do pesquisador foram usados para coletar dados. As descobertas sugerem que a pedagogia baseada no gênero escrito é um enfoque holístico para aprender sobre escritura acadêmica. Além disso, geram evidência sobre o útil que podem ser as estratégias de escritura. O estudo também indica que o tempo, a disciplina e a suficiência linguística representam desafios para os participantes. Finalmente, os participantes expressam contrastes sobre a avaliação de pares e uma percepção predominantemente positiva do inglês como o idioma para a escritura científica.

Palavras chave: Escritura académica; ensino baseado no gênero textual; estratégias para a escritura; inglês para propósitos de publicação investigativa; avaliação de pares.

Introduction

The English language is employed for purposes ranging from everyday communication to academic contexts. In fact, it has been documented that this language exercises great power when it comes to dissemination of knowledge through research writing, an academic endeavor on its own. Scholars have highlighted the prestige and challenges that come along with writing for publication in English (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Lillis & Curry, 2010), with knowledge of the language being a central challenge (Hyland, 2016b). Since English is a common language for science, scholars who lack writing skills in this language may not have the opportunity to share their expertise, an issue which has gained criticism (Hyland, 2016b; Lillis & Curry, 2010). As the power of English for publication is self-perpetuating (Ferguson, 2007; Flowerdew, 2013), figures show that around 90% of journals publish research in this language (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Consequently, there is a need to improve scholars' academic writing in English, as researchers have suggested (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013; Gea-Valor, Rey-Rocha, & Moreno, 2014).

Research in English academic writing has generally focused on the experiences of students in ESL contexts; i.e. international students in American, Australian, and English universities (Green, 2013; Leki & Carson, 1997; Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2015). In general, these studies indicate that such courses do help students improve linguistic and social aspects of academic writing and make them aware of the structure academic papers, e.g. research articles (henceforth RAs). Another research focus in academic writing has been the perceptions and attitudes that students have regarding the English language for academic writing (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013; Flowerdew, 2005; Morton et al., 2015). This research has indicated that researchers whose first language is not English need to develop English writing skills to disseminate their knowledge. The research also emphasizes that scholars feel disadvantaged when they do not master English for publication, but accept this language as a challenge and route to sharing their expertise (Hyland, 2016b; Pérez-Llantada, Ferguson, & Plo, 2011). There is scarce research, however, on perceptions and learning of scholars from different disciplines *while* engaged in English for Research Publication Purposes (henceforth ERPP) courses and on recommendations emerging from such contexts. This paper contributes to filling that gap by showing the gains, challenges, and perceptions in English academic writing that a group of professors/researchers at a Colombian state university had while engaged in a ten-week course called *Academic Writing for Publication* (henceforth AWP).

Literature Review

This literature review explores four connected areas. It discusses the relationship between English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) and then explains how RAs are structured. Further, the paper overviews issues in teaching ERPP courses, along with relevant research studies. Lastly, the review synthesizes studies into writers' perceptions of academic writing, specifically ERPP.

English for Academic Purposes and English for Research Publication Purposes

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaches students the language needed to deal with tasks for academia. Thus, academic writing is a sub-type of EAP course that has received attention in research (Hyland, 2016). There is a call for these courses to be specific (e. g. planned for a particular group of people) as they respond to students' needs (Hyland, 2016; Manchon, 2013; Tribble, 2017). Thus, an ERPP course supports researchers and graduate students in their goal to publish their research and is considered a type of EAP course (Cargill, & Burgess, 2008; Charles, 2013). Such course teaches students about RAs with a high level of specificity, a feature which is welcome in academic writing pedagogy (Atkinson, 2013; Hyland, 2016; Samraj, 2013). These courses, basically, teach students how to write research articles (Li, Flowerdew, & Cargill, 2018).

Research Articles in Academic English

As scholars have explored, RAs are the most studied genre in academic writing. For example, the structure of introductions in RAs has led to a trend in research writing: Introductions tend to have a predictable pattern of research context, research problem, and research solution, described in depth by Swales and Feak (2004) in what they call the C.A.R.S. (*Creating A Research Space*) Model. Empirical RAs, in general, are divided into at least four sections (Atkinson, 2013; Tribble, 2017): Introductions, methods, results, and discussion or conclusion (also known as IMRD) and they have been the focus of few ERPP courses (for example, Flowerdew & Wang, 2016). As authors agree, these features of academic writing in English are generalities and do not reflect RAs across fields, languages and even cultures (Flowerdew, 2013).

In an ERPP course, participants should be knowledgeable of how RAs are written in their particular fields and for particular journals (Kwan, 2010). In this regard, a pedagogy is needed that embraces how to take learners from an idea to a full-fledged RA. The next section, therefore, focuses on approaches to teaching academic writing.

Teaching ERPP Courses

ERPP courses should be fit for specific students, under specific circumstances as Hyland (2016) argues, and be geared towards helping students to write RAs (Flowerdew & Wang, 2016; Li et al, 2018). These authors have also suggested ideas for teaching ERPP courses. One such recommendation is the use of genre-based pedagogy, through which students become aware of the linguistic and disciplinary (content) aspects of academic writing (Manchon, 2013; Li et al, 2018) in their specific fields. Additionally, as Bhatia, Anthony, and Noguchi (2011) explain, researchers should also become aware of why authors in their fields write in a particular way. While not many studies report experiences in ERPP courses, Flowerdew and Wang (2016) suggest that for teaching RAs, one possible idea is to focus on how they are structured in their different sections, i.e. IMRD; and how language is used in them. This focus can be approached through genre-based teaching.

Research studies continuously show the usefulness of a genre-based pedagogy for academic writing, specifically when it comes to structure and grammar of papers (Cheng, 2008; Hyland, 2013), learning about how RAs are written (Flowerdew & Wang, 2016), the opportunity to have access to exemplars, i.e. RAs written by experts (Cheng, 2008; Tribble, 2017), and the potential for writing papers in disciplinary fields (Wingate, 2012). While it has been criticized (see Jenkins, 2014, for example), genre-based pedagogy for academic writing is effective in moving learners towards texts with appropriate formats (Hyland, 2013).

Manchon (2016) argues that students in writing courses learn to write, as well as write to learn about language. Consequently, ERPP courses should help participants foster their linguistic skills. Manchon also argues that the act of writing ignites writers' metacognition given, for instance, the thinking time required for writing text. This metacognition, in turn, can help improve linguistic accuracy.

Writers' Insights on Academic Writing

This section reviews studies in which student writers express their views towards gains, challenges, and perceptions of learning to write academically in a foreign language and publishing in English.

One of the major trends in the research indicates the positive influence of genre-based pedagogies on the learning of academic writing. The studies by Cheng (2008), Crawford, Mora, and Lengeling (2016), Green (2013), Kaufhold (2015), Leki and Carson (1997), and Pearson (2003) provide evidence to suggest that analysis of disciplinary texts leads to overall awareness of academic writing conventions, including use of tenses, author stance, moves

in sections of papers, text structure, among others. In sum, the participants in these studies learned about linguistic and rhetorical aspects of their own disciplines.

Another research focus explores the power of English for publication. In the study by Luo and Hyland (2016), the participating professors wrote in English because of the prestige and visibility this would give them. Likewise, in Bocanegra-Valle's (2013) study, the participants expressed that writing in English led to international recognition and credibility, especially in high-ranked journals written in this language. In a somewhat different tone, one of the participants in Crawford et al.'s (2016) case study expressed that English was imposed upon him, but he developed positive feelings towards writing in this language for his personal discipline-based publications.

Gea-Valor et al. **(2014)** found that the scholars thought their research writing skills in English were rather low, and found that writing the discussion section of RAs was the most challenging part of articles. Finally, the participants reported that they were most interested in writing RAs in English.

Feedback from teachers and even peers appears to be a highly valued component of academic writing courses, as student writers explain. In the studies by Morton et al. (2015) and Carvajal and Roberto (2014), students of academic writing valued feedback to improve their products, whether it came from tutors (Morton et al., 2015) or peers (Carvajal & Roberto, 2014). Indeed, positive feedback can have such a major impact on students that it may lead to improving their confidence in academic writing, as the findings in Perpignan, Rubin, and Katznelson (2007) show. Beyond the classroom context, feedback coming from peers can help papers in their path towards publication, as Lillis and Curry (2010) show.

An interesting trend about insights from academic English writers themselves is what Perpignan et al. (2007) call *byproducts* in academic writing. In their study, the researchers found that whereas academic writing courses help students with their writing skills such as taking an idea to a full paper, these courses come along other benefits. According to the authors, students also become critical and thorough readers, boost their self-confidence to deal with writing tasks, and employ social skills given the interactive nature that may occur in these scenarios. Similar findings can also be found in Carvajal and Roberto (2014).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the gains, challenges, and perceptions of a group of professors-researchers in an ERPP course. This level of specificity, the expectation of emergent findings, and the use of methods

such as questionnaires and an in-depth interview, made the research study qualitative (Silverman, 2005). Besides, the study asked participants about perceptions and attitudes towards learning how to write an RA and their engagement in an ERPP course, foci which are common in qualitative studies on academic writing (Flowerdew, 2005).

Research on academic writing has used case studies. The present study characterized the participants' gains, challenges, and perceptions as they learned to write an RA that would be potentially publishable. While case studies are limited in their scope, and therefore findings cannot be extrapolated to other contexts, this study was based on *theoretical sampling* (Silverman, 2005). The author explains theoretical sampling explores a particular theoretical issue (in the present case ERPP) and derives findings that may be useful to others. In fact, Flowerdew (2013) calls for case studies in academic writing, so pedagogical experiences are shared with and known to others.

Context and participants

The AWP course was offered by the languages institute of a state university in Colombia. The institute contacted the *Office for Academic Affairs* to ask whether an ERPP course would be welcomed at this university. The Office accepted the offer and then commissioned the institute to administer an academic writing course in English for professors and researchers wanting to publish in this language. Table 1 includes details about the AWP course.

Table 1. Features of the AWP.

Goal	Support professor-researchers to write potentially publishable papers in English.
Length, Schedule, **and Language of Instruction**	10 weeks, 4 hours each week; **English**
Contents	The C.A.R.S. model; structure and content for the *Introduction*, *Methods*, *Results*, *Discussions*, and *Conclusions* sections of RAs
Methodology	Genre-based analysis to read RAs across fields and find writing patterns. Writing strategies: Reading matrix and an outlining. Peer feedback tasks based on checklists co-constructed by participants.
Tasks	Participants wrote and revised these sections of their RA: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions

Eight scholars participated in the AWP course. Seven of the participants were professors and researchers at such university; one of them worked as the director of an important outreach department at the same university. Table 2 shows details about the participants in this study, including publication history and field and research focus for their papers. All names in the table are pseudonyms.

Table 2. Relevant Information on Participants in the AWP Course

Pseudonym	Publications before Course	Field	Focus of Research Paper
Patty (Professor and researcher)	Five in English	Animal physiology	Animal Immunology Angelfish
Global Mind (Administrative staff)	None	Internationalization of higher education	Interculturality
Rumi (Professor)	Three in Spanish None in English	Math	Irrational Numbers
Darcy (Professor and researcher)	One in English One in Spanish	Transportation	Real-Time Traffic Simulations
George (Professor)	Four in Spanish None in English	Human Factors and Ergonomics	Human Fatigue
Sirius (Researcher)	Four in Spanish One in English	Social Transportation	Equity, Social Exclusion, and Well-being
Bill (Professor and researcher)	Four in Spanish One in English	Renewable Energies Electrical Engineering	Microgrids
Kalman (Professor and coordinator of a research group)	One in Spanish One in English	High Performance Computing and Modelling	Cardiac Modelling

Before the start of the course, the participants were asked to show proof of general proficiency in English, B2 in the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001). For writing, they took a diagnostic test in which they wrote an argumentative essay to be in favor of or against lecturing in university lessons. For this test, they had to read two articles, synthesize information, and defend their position. In general, the eight participants could comfortably communicate in English but their academic writing skills needed improvement. Thus, they were welcome in the course.

Finally, the other participant in this research study was the course instructor, as a participant observer who provided insights through a researcher's journal.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires and interviews were used in this study to collect data on the development of academic writing (Flowerdew, 2005; Lillis & Curry, 2010). The first questionnaire, administered during week five of the course, asked whether participants were learning particular aspects of academic writing, research writing in their fields, and writing strategies. A second questionnaire was used to confirm gains, challenges, and/or perceptions in the course; this questionnaire had the same items as questionnaire one but with a slight change in wording: Questionnaire one asked about what participants were learning and two about what they learned. Also, this second questionnaire included a self-assessment exercise and an extra question: *What do you think was the biggest lesson you had in the AWP course?* The syllabus, written in Spanish, was sent to all professors at the university where the study took place, before the course started. Then, in the self-assessment, the items were copied verbatim so that participants could resort to Spanish (their L1) and not worry about reading comprehension issues in English.

The questionnaire was piloted with two academic writing instructors at the language institute of the university where the study took place. They commented on the wording of the items in Spanish so overly technical language was not present. Additionally, they suggested that participants should have the chance to ask questions, in case they did not understand what to do. See the appendix for the complete second questionnaire. No statistical calculations were conducted, given that this was a case study with few participants: Statistical significance to suggest interpretations about populations was not the purpose of the study.

An in-depth interview was conducted individually with all participants one week after the course ended. Interview questions included reasons for the participants to enroll in the course; and gains, challenges, and perceptions while

engaged in it. For the interview, participants could resort to either English or Spanish, whichever they would feel more comfortable using. This is why some extracts in the findings are written in Spanish and translated into English.

To substantiate findings, a third instrument was used: a teacher-researcher's journal. There were ten journal entries, with addenda for particular reflections (e.g. how genre-based teaching led to awareness of how authors synthesize in research papers). The journal entries explored the gains and challenges that the participants had in the AWP, as seen from the perceptions of the teacher-researcher. The journal elicited reflection through simple prompts: What went well and why? What did not go so well and why? What lessons (conclusions) can I derive from this particular lesson?

Data Analysis

Grounded theory was used for this study. This approach has three stages (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) for data analysis. *Open codings* refer to trends in the data that can be classified as they emerge. A second level is *axial codings*, whereby researchers look for patterns and group open codings. Finally, *selective codings* group axials and derive final categories that lead to the findings. To illustrate, two open codings were *Positive View of English* and *English for Publication*; these codings were grouped in an axial coding called *Perceptions towards English*. Finally, this axial and others were subsumed under *English as the Language for Publication*, a selective coding for the last level of data analysis. Data analysis was continuous to reiterate the meanings behind participants' answers (Johnson, 1992).

Results and discussion

The results from this study include the gains, challenges, and perceptions the participants had while in the AWP. Gains related to academic writing structure, careful reading, language awareness, and strategies for writing. The participants perceived language proficiency, time, and discipline as challenges for academic writing. Lastly, this report includes perceptions about the English language for publication and the role of feedback in academic writing courses.

Structures in English for Publication

A prominent gain the participants highlighted was the realization that academic writing for research publication involves discernable structures. The data samples show that participants learned the general structure for paragraphs in English, and more specifically and emphatically, the C.A.R.S. model for

writing introductions. The data highlights that the course raised awareness of what it means, structurally, to write academically in the English language. Regarding structure, Sirius (interview) explains: *"I learnt the C.A.R.S. model as I told you, eh, I think was the most revealing thing for me during the course because it gave me a very structural way of, of developing an introduction."* Likewise, in questionnaire two, Darcy states that, in terms of the structure of academic articles, he learnt "*The overview to go from general to specific in the paragraph, and the C.A.R.S. model"*. Finally, the following entry from the researcher's journal reiterates learning related to structures for writing:

Teaching the structure of paragraphs in English seems to be eye-opening for these participants, and it should be (…) a crucial element in courses for writing RAs; similarly, the C.A.R.S. model seemed to be a first-timer for these students, and it helped them to find a way to write the introduction.

The sample data above seem to signal that, before the course, the participants did not have these structures in English, which may have led them to such a gain in writing. Other studies (Cheng, 2008; Hyland, 2013) report that academic writing courses do help students become aware of the moves needed to write RAs. The data above also shed light on the pertinence and usefulness of including the C.A.R.S model (Swales & Feak, 2004) for ERPP courses (Flowerdew & Wang, 2016). Allusion to this model was frequent in the data, and further signals that the participants did not know it.

The Role of Reading in ERPP Courses

Another reported gain was the effective use of reading for approaching the research articles participants explored in the course. The following data show that the participants noticed that reading made them aware of not only the aforementioned rhetorical structures in English, but also linguistic aspects and journal requirements. For example, in questionnaire one, Bill stated that *"Reading matrices are very useful. I have improved the ability to analyze other articles (it's easier to find how authors signal gaps and authors' contributions) and identify the possibility to provide new contributions."* Thus, the data samples appear to recognize the wholesome experience that a genre-based pedagogy to academic writing implies. In the interview extract below, Rumi commented on the impact of reading articles carefully:

If I look at the journals in my area, I start to see and understand article structures, how they focus their introduction, how they present their experiments, how they present the discussion, and how they, let's say, finish and conclude; that has been very important.

This journal entry explored how genre analysis appeared to be an enriching activity in the course.

Genre analysis has consolidated as a fruitful approach to the analysis of RAs; participants benefited from looking at sample papers and find trends in synthesis, which they also used for papers in their own fields. For example, type of synthesis, number of authors in synthesis, and citation style.

This information aligns with literature related to a genre-based pedagogy for academic writing. Similar to this study, participants in Cheng (2008) and Hyland (2013) became aware of structure and language of academic papers. Besides, the study by Pearson (2003) showed participants learned details about citation styles, a result that also emerged in the present study.

Also, reading led participants to notice language patterns emerging from research articles. The sample data below indicate that participants identified linguistic items such as tenses and their uses; besides, through reading, the participants realized how important it is to hedge when writing discussions in research papers. In this interview sample, George comments on learning about grammar tenses: *"One starts to write the article and can start talking in present, then goes to past, then future and goes back to past within the same area in the structure, without having changed.*" Similarly, in questionnaire two, Darcy stated that he learned "*the importance of tenses to write each part of the document, and to make the discussion through hedging."*

Hyland (2016) has discussed the need to address hedging in academic writing courses. The findings in this study support Hyland's argument and suggest that such a topic may make research writers aware of their role when reporting their scholarly work. Overall, the language-related results support Manchon's (2016) contention that academic writing courses not only target learning about writing but also learning about language.

Strategies for Academic Writing

A last gain for the participants involved strategies for academic writing. Specifically, the participants argued that *outlining* and *a reading matrix* helped them approach the task of writing their RAs. The data show the variety of uses that the participants gave to these two strategies. In questionnaire two, Global Mind stated that she *"learnt that the outline is a powerful tool if we use it and do a very reflective work to refine it."* In questionnaire one, she mentioned that she learnt that *"matrix is a tool that helps me to read articles with more precision and focus."* In his interview, Darcy explained his approach to outlining.

I start to know make an outline to write anything no matter if is to write academic paper or an e-mail… it's is so important these kind of tools I start to feel comfortable because I have really really effective tools…to achieve my goals.

Strategies for academic writing are reported in the literature. For example, Kwan (2010) implies that strategies should be part of efforts to support research writing; the present study capitalizes on that idea by means of outlining and reading matrices as writing strategies. In Green (2013), outlining was a key component for one of the participants to advance her academic writing endeavors. As for reading as a strategy to improve writing, Cheng (2008) highlights the usefulness of reading to raise awareness of academic writing.

Byproducts in Academic Writing

Perpignan et al. (2007) state that byproducts (e.g. self-confidence) in academic writing courses are gains that do not necessarily include skills directly related to writing. In the present study, confidence emerged as a byproduct of the AWP course. The participants reported in the interview that their confidence increased thanks to being engaged in the course. Kalman explored the issue of confidence for writing:

> *There is more confidence because there are more tools to achieve at least a well written publication; more confidence generates at the time to send more papers… it is confidence for what one is writing… I already know that I am writing better, that I have better structure, and that I am defining the gap well.*

Similar to the present study, the studies by Perpignan et al. (2007) and Carvajal and Roberto (2014) also report an increase in confidence for academic writing among course participants. Therefore, that writers increase their self-confidence seems to be a trend in the literature on learning about academic writing and may imply that, at the very least, academic writing courses can empower students for the task of writing.

Challenges in an ERPP Course

The participants stated that overall language proficiency and the lack of time and discipline may be problematic for academic writing. The first challenge, particularly, involves language proficiency, which is needed to be engaged in an academic writing course, as Patty explains in her interview: *"It is a challenge to receive class in English. Expressing myself in English is still complicated for me, and despite being able to write, I find it difficult to understand and speak."* When asked about challenges not related to writing, Global Mind stated in questionnaire one that a challenge was *"the little time I can devote to read and write with real disposition and availability (lack of discipline????)."*

Similarly, the literature has reported challenges that students have for academic writing. Luo and Hyland (2016), for instance, state that writing in English is a challenge on its own. In Morton et al. (2015), one of the participants found it challenging to build her own writing identity. In the present study, it must be noted that these participants felt the need to develop their overall English skills; this perception is consonant with overall literature in academic writing, with scholars (Flowerdew, 2013; Lillis & Curry, 2010) arguing that non-English researchers need strong skills in this language to interact in the scientific arena of their fields. As for time and discipline, the participants in the present study were researchers and professors or administrative staff at the university where they work, which may exercise a burden on their writing agendas.

Perceptions about English and Feedback in this ERPP Course

A last set of results in this study are perceptions the participants had towards being in the AWP course. All participants emphasized the role of English as a language for communicating science. Additionally, they had mixed perceptions about the role of peer-feedback in the AWP course. The interview data show that all the participants view English as the go-to language for publication, regarding it as useful for communication with peers from around the world. For example, in his interview, Sirius stated the following.

> *I think it's the way to go. It doesn't, for me it doesn't make sense to write scientifically in Spanish. Eh, why? Because, well, science is written in English. I think that English eh puts eh a standard to the way scienti... science is written. They say everybody are going to write in English so you have to write in English now. Eh you can communicate your research, your interests with a guy in Russia or with a guy in China.*

In her interview, Patty shared similar feelings to Sirius': *"English is the perfect language to write science."*

In conclusion, it seems that, for the participants, English is the de facto lingua franca for scientific writing, given its usefulness for communicating research in their fields. Particularly, readers may remember that Patty has written five articles in English, which could suggest that she is used to writing in this language –or perhaps her discipline encourages this fact. It has been remarked that English is powerful for communication, and it is a goal for scholars wanting to publish in this language (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013; Pérez-Llantada et al, 2011). The same trend seems to underlie the present study. Participants had it as a goal to write academically in English to have potentially publishable work. It is worth noticing that seven of the participants published in English, which may ignite positive attitudes towards the language.

Regarding the role of peer feedback in the course, participants had differing views. For example, George argued that peer feedback was useful to analyze his own writing. In the interview, he shared the following insight.

> *When I read what a classmate had done, I gave it an interpretation… and then he'd tell me: 'No, what I mean was this.' So I found that there was no clarity… so that'd make us see that we had to think about the reader.*

Conversely, Sirius mentioned: *"I honestly think that you are not in the position to give feedback. I gave feedback only on the positive… and he didn't give me feedback. Maybe he felt the same."* In the teacher's journal, reflections on feedback were positive: *"Peer feedback in these courses may lead to an awareness towards being clear when writing, even if people from other fields read one's paper."*

The participants viewed peer feedback mainly positively in the course. In the study by Carvajal and Roberto (2014), participants benefitted from receiving feedback from partners. However, the data in the present study also suggest a caution for the place of feedback in academic writing courses, specifically when writers come from different fields. It is this fact perhaps what makes peer feedback a challenge: In an ERPP course with researchers from different fields, they may feel they do not have the authority to comment on others' work. This is interesting, as students were asked to focus on the moves for their articles, not on their content, as this journal entry explains: "Even with students coming from different fields, peer feedback may be useful as long as it is guided by frameworks such as the CARS model".

Conclusions and recommendations

Few case studies of ERPP courses are reported in the literature, which is a gap this present case study seeks to start to fill. The present study reports that, among the main gains from being engaged in the AWP course, the participants highlighted learning about rhetorical structures for writing in English. Other gains included the power of reading articles and learning about language structures by this means. Finally, a prominent gain in the study was the use of the two strategies taught for writing: A reading matrix and outlining. This may mean there is a space for explicit attention to writing strategies in ERPP courses. Furthermore, the participants reported time, discipline, and language proficiency as challenges to surpass in ERPP. Finally, the participants viewed English as an appropriate language for the publication process and shared differing views on peer feedback.

While a limitation of the present research is that it is a case study in a context with unique researchers, three recommendations may prove useful for other places where these context-sensitive ERPP courses may be designed.

First and foremost, a genre-based pedagogy is fully supported in this study. Teachers may want to explore such approach for teaching (academic) writing; for instance, they may engage students in close reading of texts through which they can identify rhetorical and language patterns (as shown in Flowerdew & Wang, 2016); in the present case, empirical RAs were useful to identify patterns such as how sentences are structured in their discussion section, or linguistic choices such as the accurate use of tenses. Second, students should be taught strategies for writing. In this study, outlining and a reading matrix were new to the participants, who fully embraced the strategies and made them their own. Along with skills in genre analysis, specific strategies help writers become more confident–as the findings here suggest–to approach the research writing task. Finally, peer feedback does have a place in academic writing courses but teachers must be aware that in contexts where students are writing widely different papers, there may be some resistance due to professional factors (e.g. face-keeping). In such case, teachers may want to direct feedback to, for example, how students are transitioning in paragraphs or hedging: Peer feedback could focus more on structure and language, rather than content. Thus, the role of peer feedback in an ERPP course is a recommended research path, especially when it is used with students coming from different disciplines.

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Appendix

Second Questionnaire

Dear professor, please answer the questions below based on your experience in the Academic Writing for Publication Course. You can answer the questions in English or Spanish.

1. In the Academic Writing for Publication course, did you learn anything about...

   a. academic writing in general? If yes, what? If not, why?

   b. analysis of research articles? If yes, what? If not, why?

   c. research writing in your own field? If yes, what? If not, why?

   d. writing strategies? If yes, what? If not, why?

   e. structure of academic and research articles? If yes, what? If not, why?

2. Anything else you learned about academic writing?

3. In the Academic Writing for Publication course, have you had any challenges or difficulties related to writing? If so, please describe them.

4. Have you had other types of challenges? If so, please describe them.

5. Is there anything you need to improve in terms of academic writing? If so, please describe.

6. Look at the specific objectives/skills that were part of the course. Evaluate you whether you achieved the objective or not. Use this scale:

   1: I did not achieve this objective.

   2: I am still struggling with this objective.

   3: I achieved this objective.

Specific objectives for the AWP course (Taken from the syllabus written in Spanish and sent to all professors and researchers where study took place.)

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Evaluar fuentes de información para la escritura de textos académicos y científicos; estas fuentes incluyen revistas, convocatorias para eventos, libros editados, entre otras.

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Crear matrices para organizar literatura relacionada con el tema de investigación o del artículo.

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Escribir un esquema exhaustivo del escrito en desarrollo.

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Sintetizar fuentes de información para crear argumentos sólidos en la escritura del texto.

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Entender y usar los "movimientos estructurales" en las diferentes secciones de textos

---

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Tener prácticas éticas relacionadas con la escritura académica en inglés, por ejemplo citas efectivas, confiabilidad de fuentes de información, entre otras.

7. What do you think was the biggest lesson you had in the AWP course?
8. What recommendations do you have for the course?

Thank you!

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Revisiting the Issue of Knowledge in English Language Teaching, A Revision of Literature

Reconsiderando El Tema del Conocimiento en la Enseñanza del Inglés, Una Revisión de la Literatura.

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Abstract

In the following literature review, I set out to show an analysis of the main developments regarding the study of in-service English teachers' (IELTs) knowledge. In the first part, I trace scholarly work regarding the topic at the national and international levels. I bring up both poststructuralist and decolonial perspectives to problematize the concept of teacher knowledge base (Shulman 1987, 2005). By means of research profiling and data base search, articles and trends related to the issue of teachers' knowledge were found. The analysis suggests that there are two core trends in the study of English teachers' knowledge in Colombian publications. The first shows that there are studies which revolve around backing up the concept of knowledge base. The second one shows that few studies take up a different perspective towards the study of English teachers' knowledge.

Key Words: Teacher knowledge; decolonial perspective in ELT; knowledge base;

Resumen

En el siguiente texto de revisión bibliográfica, me propongo mostrar un análisis de los principales desarrollos concernientes al conocimiento de los docentes de inglés en ejercicio. En la primera parte, realizo un rastreo de trabajos teóricos y de investigación relacionados con el tema a nivel nacional e internacional. Traigo a colación perspectivas posestructuralistas y decoloniales para problematizar el concepto de conocimiento de base desarrollado por Shulman (1987, 2005) Por medio de perfiles y búsqueda en bases de datos, se

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encontraron artículos y tendencias relacionados con el tema del conocimiento profesoral. El análisis sugiere que hay dos tendencias principales en el estudio del conocimiento de los docentes de inglés. La primera muestra que hay estudios que giran en torno a reforzar el concepto de conocimiento de base. La segunda muestra que muy pocos estudios involucran una perspectiva diferente acerca del estudio del conocimiento profesoral de los profesores de inglés.

Palabras clave: conocimiento docente; perspectiva decolonial en enseñanza de inglés; conocimiento de base.

Resumo

No seguinte texto de revisão bibliográfica, proponho-me a mostrar uma análise dos principais desenvolvimentos referentes ao conhecimento dos docentes de inglês em exercício. Na primeira parte, realizo um rastreamento de trabalhos teóricos e de pesquisa relacionados com o tema a nível nacional e internacional. Menciono perspectivas pós-estruturalistas e decoloniais para problematizar o conceito de conhecimento de base desenvolvido por Shulman (1987, 2005) Por meio de perfis e pesquisa em bases de dados, encontraram-se artigos e tendências relacionados com o tema do conhecimento professoral. A análise sugere que existem duas tendências principais no estudo do conhecimento dos docentes de inglês. A primeira mostra que existem estudos que giram em torno a reforçar o conceito de conhecimento de base. A segunda mostra que muito poucos estudos envolvem uma perspectiva diferente sobre o estudo do conhecimento professoral dos professores de inglês.

Palavras chave: conhecimento docente; perspectiva decolonial em ensino de inglês; conhecimento de base.

El conocimiento es sólo una de las representaciones de la existencia.[3]
José Vasconcelos

[3] Knowledge is just one representation of existence (Author's translation)

Introduction

In this text I intend to develop the main theoretical tenets that support the study of in-service English language teachers' knowledges as well as provide an overview of the principal research developments concerning this topic first at the local level and then in the mainstream arena locating myself in a decolonial conceptual position.

In the first part of the article readers will find first an exploration of when, where and who has published research or theory in relation to the concept of teachers' knowledges. In the second part, I posit a decolonial standpoint in order to ground a critique of the universalizing aim of the concept of teachers' knowledge base, acknowledging my bias that no knowledge can further advance if arguments are given from the same epistemological ground that one scrutinizes. I will then move on reviewing some of the main academic works in the topic of English language teachers' knowledges and a few contributions from Colombian researchers in other areas. Afterwards, I will argue for a decolonial disciplinary ELT knowledge by bringing up traditional and critical complex standpoints towards in-service English language teachers' knowledges. At the end, I will draw some concluding remarks.

Profiling Scholarly Work about Teachers' Knowledge.

In this article the term "profiling" is being used as suggested by Porter, Kongthon & Lu (2002). One of the aims of profiling research is to facilitate finding research trends by means of text-mining (examining numerous abstracts in databases). Some questions that are answered by means of research profiling are: how many articles have been produced in certain area? Who builds up the research community interested in the topic? Profiling is not meant to substitute a literature review. Rather it is intended to further it at the macro level by finding out tendencies and relationships beyond the few articles that can be found manually when surfing databases.

To trace research concerning teachers' knowledge, I used the bibliometric analysis provided by the database Scopus in April 2017. To do this, a time spam between 1963 and 2017 was selected. Based on statistics provided by the database and information it displayed by country, number of publications and source, some conclusions were drawn. For example, in the 60s, the intellectual work concerning teachers' knowledge appears to be emergent with a scarce dissemination of 1or 2 articles in this decade up to the mid-70s. By the end of the 70s and the 80s between 3 and 12 articles were available. The 90s showed that the articles production in the area doubled. From around 14 to 27 articles were published. In the period 2001-2010 articles publication about teachers'

knowledge increased fivefold. Finally, between 2011 and 2014 there was a steady rise in articles publication from 203 to 259.

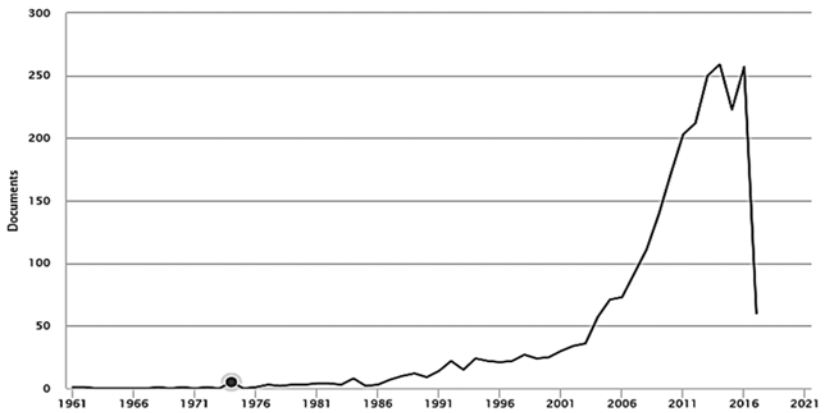

Figure 1. Source: Scopus, retrieved March 31st 2017

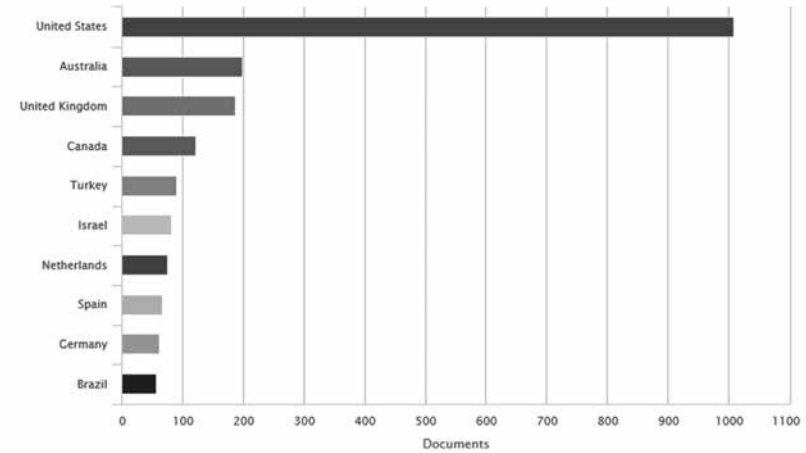

Figure 2. Source: Scopus, retrieved March 31st 2017

As for the geographical location and journals, it can be said that academic production regarding teachers' knowledge has been particularly distributed as follows: The US with more than 1000 articles, Australia and The UK with almost 200 articles, Canada with more than 100 articles, and Turkey, Israel, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, and Brazil with less than 100 publications.

If journals are ranked considering the biggest amount of documents on the subject of teachers' knowledge we have: *Journal Of Mathematics Teacher Education* (65), *Journal Of Teacher Education* (45), *Teachers and Teaching Theory and Practice* (40), *International Journal Of Science Education* (39), *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* (34), *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education* (33), *Educational Studies In Mathematics* (30), *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* (30), *Journal of Science Teacher Education* (28), and *Research in Science Education* (28). Particularly in the English Language Teaching field, the following journals were found to have some articles regarding the topic in this way: *Tesol Quarterly* (11), *Language Awareness* (6) *Elt Journal* (3).

From this research profile, I infer that the interest towards teachers' knowledge started in the mid-80s and has increased five times after 2001. Most research has been concentrated in Math, Science, Teacher Education, and to a lesser extent in the English Language Teaching field. Moreover, the production has been mostly carried out in Anglo or European countries. This inference will come to support what I will further argue in the next parts of the text.

A Decolonial Perspective towards English Language Teachers' Knowledges

Despite the word *knowledge* is singular in the English language, I use the more flexible and embracing word knowledges (Sousa Santos, 2007, 2009) along the document. By knowledges, I not only refer to teachers' experiences, theories, beliefs, actions, and skills (Díaz Maggioli, 2012) that teachers are supposed to hold but I am also considering the realm of the knowledge that has been made invisible or silenced by the Western canon of thought.

In the same way, two ideas should be clarified here –decoloniality and decolonial turn- in order to better understand the perspective, I am going to introduce. According to Quijano (2007) 'Decoloniality' exposes how European/North American ideas and peoples imposed themselves as cognitive models to be followed. Particularly, the scheme of knowledge production followed a pattern of "knowledge as a product of a subject/object relation" (p. 172) in which the subject is the European/North American while other people are the object of study –or the consumers of their knowledge as I have elsewhere pinpointed out (See Castañeda-Londoño, 2018). Quijano (2007) overtly unmasks that "only European culture is rational, it can contain 'subjects' –the rest are not rational, they cannot be or harbor 'subjects'. As a consequence, the other cultures are different in the sense that they are unequal, in fact, inferior by nature. They can only be 'objects' of knowledge or/and of domination practices" (p. 174). This author calls for a liberation of knowledge production from "the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity" (p. 177) and the recognition of the "heterogeneity of reality" (p. 177).

The Decolonial thought, for Asher (2013) is related to a communal project of critique towards the European Modernity born in Latin America that exposes the colonial effects on the Latin American cultures. Within this movement the actual birth of the modernity world system is historically located in the conquest of the Americas. The decolonial choice aims at digging into the knowledge and experiences "of those who have been on the borders of colonial modernity" (Asher, 2013, p. 833) Bhambra (2014) differentiates decolonial thought (from 1492 on) from postcolonialism (19th-20th centuries) in that the former was begun by Latin American intellectuals in diaspora while the latter was begun by Middle East and South Asian intellectuals while in the same diasporic condition and using concepts from poststructuralists such as Foucault.

Drawing on Alvarado (2015), I locate myself in an epistemological decolonial ground. Thus, I bring up the fact that the academia disseminates knowledge/power relations that are rooted in the couple coloniality-modernity[4]. One result of this convergence is the rejection of knowledges produced in the periphery. I hope the reader does not see the next lines as patronizing but as a way to reflect on the nature of our ideas in ELT and the ways in which our voices can be heard in the broader ELT landscape with identity(ies), feelings and experiences of our own.

Ruiz Solórzano (2016) suggests having a more critical and less foreign epistemic standpoint in the development of the Latin American social sciences as current analytical frameworks fall short in accounting for the various social and cultural happenings that have historically occurred and that are currently occurring that consistently intend to globalize and homogenize the world. For Ruiz Solórzano (2016) the fragmentation of knowledge as a consequence of its institutionalization is a fact in the social sciences. This criticism can also fit in the ELT arena. Aligned with that view, I would like to make the case that in our ELT field there has also been what some scholars (E.g. Dussel, 1998; Quijano, 2008) call coloniality of knowledge. Thus, within this view, local teachers' knowledges have been made to be fragmented, stratified, or tested (González, 2009) to control their production and teachers' self-regulation. Specifically in Colombia, Noguera Ramirez (2005) backed up in Foucault (1976) suggests of pedagogy and pedagogical research as "subdued knowledges" (p. 43) because academia has failed to recognize them as such by subtle mechanisms like their dilution in other disciplines (e.g. psychology or sociology), by concealing their history within socioeconomic frames or by constructing the teachers as intellectuals controlled by knowledges produced in other disciplines.

[4] The concept of coloniality is used to describe the intellectual, linguistic, and economic effects that colonialism left in the planet Earth. Geographical colonialism already finished but intellectual coloniality still remains.

The ELT field as an academic discipline itself has regulated the legitimation of the "teachers' knowledge base" concept (Shulman 1987) as a scientific discourse in our field that comes from the cognitive sciences. One difficulty with this perspective is that there is a tendency to unify the concept of knowledge. This problem stems from the European modernity and that is why, the so-called universal character of the Anglo European experiences does not leave room for other forms of knowledge, therefore, these world views turn out to be the only valid ones. This northern conceptualization is prone to be problematized in the Latin American, more specifically, Colombian periphery. For Ruiz Solórzano (2016) the current intellectual framework does not reflect the historical reality, and the "accumulated knowledge" (p. 30) does not make further sense because in the periphery, we are establishing knowledge within frames that are not ours. Consequently, other ways of knowing are not explored, understood, or allowed.

In Asher's (2013) words "coloniality normalizes" (p.834) therefore its current hegemonic stance takes away our capability of figuring out other possible ways of seeing the world, constructing or tracing knowledge. One effect is that in-service EFL teachers may not dare to explore or conceptualize what knowledge entails for them. That is why, Zemelman (2012) cited in Ruiz Solórzano (2016) states that if we are interested in constructing knowledge we cannot just focus on recounting what has already been produced or framed within dominant discourses with universality biases. Instead, we should frame our thoughts in our various Latin American mindsets as we see reality differently. However, these claims, in real life practices scholars tend to fail to achieve such deeds. In the next section, I will outline some of such cases in the local ELT field.

By now, I would like to bring up Colombian scholar Fandiño (2013), who says that teacher education programs (TEPs) "must not see teaching as a static and prescriptive activity. Instead, they should regard it as a dynamic process characterized by reflection and change" (p. 90) Nonetheless, most scholarly work in the ELT local field appeals to Shulman (1987), Calderhead (1988), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Wallace (1991) -to name just a few scholars- for positioning their own knowledge production. As the Epistemologies of the South (Sousa Santos, 2009) put forward, there is need to spot the different colonial practices (either Portuguese, French, Iberian, British or North American). Therefore, it is my intention here to unpack some of such practices of coloniality especially those carried out in the local ELT academia. What I mean is, much academic work in ELT follows canonic patterns of thought which oftentimes validate current knowledge production from other places that may not reflect local realities.

Consequently, the continuous backup of our local intellectual work in Anglo-American or European authors, in my view, entails a lack of detachment

from the North-Colonial-Modern mindset. What this puts forward is that we are in deep need of exploring the *other* knowledge (el saber otro, Alvarado, 2015), the one constructed in this part of the world which involves a completely different episteme from those of Europe or North America. For Escobar (2007) the "saber otro" relates to what Walter Mignolo calls "un paradigma otro" which should not be understood as just another paradigm in Latin America. Escobar (2007) defines it as "another way of thinking that runs counter to the great modernist narratives (Christianity, Liberalism, Marxism)" (p. 180). This paradigm situates its research agenda in "the borders of a system of thought and reaches towards the possibility of non-Eurocentric models of thinking" (p. 180).

Within this decolonial stance, there is need to acknowledge what Freire (1997) calls the awareness that we, as human beings, are *unfinished* and if that is so we do not benefit from a universalizing, fragmented, instrumental, static view of knowledge but from unveiling *the other* knowledge, the one that has been subdued or made invisible. If, as Freire (1997) suggests, we cultivate the power to critically observe the way we exist in the world, reality and therefore knowledge, are ongoing processes of becoming; we are thus *unfinished* and so is reality.

I want to finish this section with a story. Once I heard that eagles were able to renew themselves when they turned 40 so they could live up to 70. Such a renewal was painful as they had to pluck their own feathers, knock their beak off and get rid of their talons. I marveled at the story of the eagle in its capacity to be reborn. While writing this text my memory resorted to this story to relate it to the decolonial epistemology; I actually thought of it as a metaphor that exemplified a decolonial perspective in our ELT education considering that we teachers, were "eagles" that wanted to renovate by getting rid of our deeply rooted modern and colonial ways. When I intended to document myself "scientifically" to make a good argument, my grounds to believe in the story and use it as a metaphor just vanished. To my surprise the story of the eagles was just another self-help story of strength as eagles would eventually die if they dared to remove their beaks, feathers or talons. I was astonished at my naivety. Still, this discovery made me reflect that what counts as knowledge always needs to be revisited and this is the primary intention of the next lines.

Contemporary EFL Colombian Thought Regarding English Language Teachers' Knowledges.

To give an account of the Colombian scholarly activity concerning a conceptualization of In-service English Language Teachers' (IELTs) knowledges in the Colombian context, I looked for articles in which the topic of teacher knowledge was taken as the main area of interest. I analyzed

the titles and abstracts of 11 journals, namely: *Lenguaje* (2004-2017), from Universidad del Valle; *Matices* (2008-2015) and *Profile* (2000-2017) from Universidad Nacional; *Revista Colombiana de Educación* (2008-2017) and Folios (1990-2017) from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional; *How* (1997-2017) from the Colombian Association of English teachers; *Ikala* (1996-2017) from Universidad de Antioquia, *Gist* (2007-2016) from UNICA; *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal* (2003-2017) and *Enunciación* (2006-2016) from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, and *Paideia* (1992-2016) from Universidad Surcolombiana.

The following review of articles is about but not bound to the in-service ELT field, this is basically because scholars in other branches of education (e.g. initial teacher education, pre-service teachers, teacher education) have mainly, dealt with the issue of teachers' knowledge. In fact, the topic has been more explored in initial teacher education than in in-service teaching.

From Normative to Avant-garde Views of In-service English Language Teachers' (IELTs) Knowledges.

In this part of the paper, I document two trends in the ELT academia related to In-service English teachers' knowledges. The first trend consists of comprehensive literature reviews and research papers by authors whose view regarding teachers' knowledge consider Shulman's (1987) conceptualization of teachers' knowledge base consisting of core areas such as disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners or knowledge of educational ends. The second trend is that there are also emergent research studies whose aim is to position knowledge from a different standpoint, for example from a narrative perspective.

For Pineda Baez (2002) in her theory-based article, a definition of the English teacher knowledge base is paramount, especially when it comes to evaluating "if teacher preparation programs are meeting the standards for excellence in education" (p. 9). Thus, it can be inferred that one of the reasons why teacher knowledge is important relates to a frame of external evaluation. Similarly, understanding what knowledge base entails is of interest for bettering the quality of teaching practices, the author says. In the past, she says -presumably before Shulman's model- teacher's knowledge was thought of mere learning of pedagogical and subject matter skills.

Although Pineda Baez (2002) acknowledges that a single response to the quest for teacher knowledge is problematic, she resorts to Shulman's (1987) model of knowledge base to equate different categories of English teachers' knowledge to Shulman's model. For example, *content knowledge* would relate to semantics, phonology, syntax, etc. Interestingly, she warns that teachers

must be ready to challenge this knowledge and suggests that initial teacher education is just a small part of the continuous preparation teachers should have. Regarding the concept of *general pedagogical knowledge*, the author relates it to teaching strategies, decision-making, and classroom management. *Pedagogical content knowledge* is connected to the examples, demonstrations, and means through which the subject matter (English) is made manageable which is exemplified by the author in terms of the grammar examples, the designed materials and the reading and writing skills and TESL/TEFL methods. *Curricular knowledge* would involve knowing the programs of the school scheme. *Knowledge of learners* would relate to being able to adapt teaching methods to different EFL/ESL populations and the knowledge of cognitive process students develop to learn (content reception, storage, retrieval etc.). And finally, the concept of *knowledge of educational goals and philosophical bases* does not go far beyond Shulman's own view of knowing the society expectations of the type of human being that is expected to be educated. Still, Pineda Baez (2002) does highlight that another component must be added to the teacher knowledge base and is precisely the recognition of teachers and teachers-to- be as knowledge producers through research. Even though the author positions in a normative epistemology of IELTs' knowledge, this final remark is of interest to a decolonial standpoint for ELT education in the sense that research allows finding situated meanings and practices that could not be found otherwise.

Cardenas and Suárez (2009) inquired about the origins and components of five pre-service teachers' knowledge base and the process they had followed to build it. The authors ground their work in four constructs. They are a) teacher education which refers to the whole educational process people follow to become competent teachers through academic and field work, b) pre-service teaching which the authors define as the period in which teachers-to-be will receive the knowledge they require to teach, c) teaching practice which is a period during course work in which "theory and practice come together" (p. 116) and d) knowledge base which is defined –quoting Shulman (2005) - "as the amalgam of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that underline the capacity to teach effectively" that is comprised of subject knowledge, tenets of inquiry, ability to turn content into understandable ideas for students, knowledge of learners etc. (Shulman, 2005 in Cardenas and Suárez, 2009 p. 116).

Through a phenomenological interview, journals and a survey, they found that the teachers' knowledge base resulted from first, all the involvement participants had along their lives with academic contexts (from kindergarten to university), second, reading theoretical constructs in their coursework, third, pre-service teachers' experience with real life classrooms, fourth, classmates and lectures, and fifth, partaking with their own learners. For the participants, the knowledge base is composed of language knowledge, knowledge of

students, and pedagogic knowledge. The authors concede that the concept of knowledge base by Shulman (1987, 2005) has been the founding element of other studies concerning teachers' knowledge and their own. The authors extend our understanding of how some local teachers come to build the repertoire of ideas that Shulman calls the knowledge base. However, these categorizations might have shortcomings when accounting for an analysis of how the lived experience of diverse knowledges come to interact in the social practices. In a similar vein, the experience of partaking with learners is not given a stronger value as a source of knowledge for teachers.

An exploration of five teacher educators and five novice teachers 'awareness of the sources for pedagogical knowledge was carried out by Macias (2013). This author was interested in finding the ways teachers learned about the act of teaching in times in which teachers' knowledges are tested by means of students' standardized examinations. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and analysis of syllabi and curriculum documents of classes such as didactics, teaching practicum I, II, III, and pedagogy. The author takes the construct pedagogical knowledge from Shulman (1986b and 1987) who conceptualizes it as "teachers' accumulated knowledge about the act of teaching that serves as the foundation for their classroom behavior and activities" (Shulman 1986b and 1987 in Macias 2013 p. 100). In the literature introduced by the author, four sources of EFL teachers' knowledge are apparent. They are a) knowledge about teaching developed from the time students were at elementary or high school, b) knowledge gotten from learning to teach at coursework in the bachelor's degree, c) knowledge coming from experience, and d) knowledge taken from a research process.

The author found that for the novice participants the principal source of knowledge was their B.A degree course work. For the teacher educators, the B.A degree as well as the M.A studies were just a couple among many other sources. Novice teachers also asserted to have increased their pedagogical knowledge by observing other teachers despite the scarce opportunities the curriculum provided for those observations. The third source of knowledge considered by both novice and teacher educators is the classroom experience. The fourth source of knowledge found was the teachers' personal epistemologies. The final source of knowledge was research. Through this study, two types of knowledge are validated from previous work by Shulman (1987), namely, knowledge from experience and knowledge from research. Macias (2013) advances in the discussion of knowledge through the recognition of personal epistemologies and previous learning experiences as other sources of teachers' knowledge. If a comparison is drawn between Macias (2013), Cardenas and Suarez (2009), and Shulman (1987, 2005) one can get to see that the concept of knowledge base would not be a static category. These studies intended to find what the sources for a knowledge base were. The findings showed

different results from which I infer that the concept of base may be actually a misconception because what might entail a core or a base for some people is different from what it entails for others.

A revision of literature about knowledge and EFL teachers by Fandiño (2013) shows his main concern is to define what knowledge base is when it comes to effective teaching in the context of EFL Teacher Education Programs (TEPs). The first author cited is Shulman (1987) with his -already mentioned here- five dimensions of knowledge (content, pedagogy, curriculum, context, educational ends). Then, Fandiño (2013) focuses specifically on language teaching and refers to Lafayette (1993) to mention competence and knowledge about language, culture, second language acquisition and applied linguistics as the domains of English teachers' knowledge base. Day (1993)'s model is also cited. It concerns teachers' knowledge based on knowledge of teaching practices (preparing the lesson, managing the class), support knowledge (linguistics, sociolinguistics, and other disciplines that inform language teaching and learning), content knowledge (structural aspects of the English language). Freeman and Johnson (1998)'s conceptualization of English teachers' knowledge is also mentioned with six elements: "theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, language proficiency, subject matter knowledge (specialized disciplinary knowledge), pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and contextual knowledge (educational, linguistic, policies)" (Fandiño, 2013, p. 86). Other scholars mentioned in Fandiño's review are Tarone & Allright (2005) who extended Freeman and Johnson's (1998) model with knowledge of "second and foreign language learner" (Fandiño, 2013, p.87)

As we have seen, Day (1993), Lafayette (1993), Freeman & Johnson (1998) among others are cited in Fandiño (2013) to carry out his analysis of teachers' knowledge base. These scholars in turn draw inevitably on Shulman's (1987) conceptualization of knowledge base. It could be said that ideas such as general pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts and learners, or knowledge of educational ends, first proposed by Shulman (1987) are tailored for the English teaching profession. If Freeman and Johnson (1998) are traced back, one can notice that although the concept of knowledge base was questioned, it did not advance much further.

Hence, although Fandiño (2013) states that teachers-to-be need to develop their own voice so that their *knowledge base improves* (my emphasis), the core conceptualizations of what teacher knowledge base is have remained almost the same since the mid-1980s. Still, Fandiño (2013) reflects that the intricate nature of EFL TEPs and the multiple factors that impact teacher knowledge make it difficult to develop a single way to prepare Colombian EFL teachers' knowledge for the various socio-cultural aspects faced in classrooms.

The author proposes to use systematic inquiry to move from mere reflective practices to help pre-service teachers "generate a voice of their own" (p. 93)

Mendieta Aguilar (2011) researched teachers' narrative knowledge. The study aim was to find the ways in which teachers' narrative knowledge about foreign language teaching molded and characterized the curriculum stories that existed in the classroom. Narrative interviews, concept maps, and biodata surveys were used to collect data. Three English teachers, from a private university language department, were the research participants. The author states that the interplay between life experiences, beliefs, teachers' knowledge and the curriculum somehow affect language learning. Her findings construct the participants as being learners, teachers, and curriculum makers. Three ways were found in which narratively speaking teachers experienced knowledge. They are directly related to each research participant.

The first category unveiled three standpoints towards knowledge. The first teacher "adopted a student-centered approach to language teaching" (p.97), through which he detached from the fixed curriculum and developed his own understanding of it. This theme shows a teacher concerned with fostering communication and avoiding some textbooks meaningless activities. The second teacher "adopted a goal-oriented approach to language teaching" (p. 98) in which she intended to allow learners have interaction with thought-provoking activities that ultimately helped them reach the objectives pre-established by the curriculum. Even when having a product-oriented view, the teacher also pinpointed the tensions between a standards and testing-based curriculum given by the institution and her view that such a curriculum demands a lot in terms of content for a short time spam which could hinder results. The third teacher "adopted a language-oriented approach to language teaching" (p. 99) in which the main emphasis was to develop an appropriate command of the language so learners could be successful at communicating. These three approaches to knowledge drove the researcher to characterize the first participant as an experiential and interaction-driven language teacher, the second participant as a strategic and goal-oriented language teacher and the third participant as a fun-driven and language-centered teacher.

Mendieta Aguilar (2011) concludes that the three teachers' narrative knowledge emerged as something unique to each one, despite their membership to a particular teacher community. Their distinctive teaching, learning, and experiences had molded their knowledge and beliefs systems. Drawing on Clandinin (1985), the author suggests that personal practical knowledge is the sort of knowledge that is permeated with the experiences that build a person's being. To this inference, she adds:

> "the type of curriculum these three teachers lived and co-constructed with their students, and which they transformed with varying frequency, was

all mediated, filtered and informed by their personal practical knowledge and the external factors previously described" (p. 104)

The final salient idea coming from this study is that there is an urgent need to value, comprehend and spread teachers' narrative knowledge because it is a fertile ground of exploration of the teaching practices.

From a decolonial perspective applied to IELTs' knowledge, Mendieta Aguilar's finding that narrative knowledge emerged as something unique to each teacher helps problematize a normalized view of teachers' knowledge, namely, that there is such a thing as a knowledge base that is the same for all teachers in the world. According to this research, knowledge base would not comprise a set of general theories but much more contextualized knowledge experiences that have been made invisible because of the universalist character that the concept of knowledge base has come to have.

More recently other local authors have studied issues related to teachers' knowledge from a different vantage point and probably advancing the understanding of teachers' knowledge. Interested in what it is like to experience ELT in rural Colombia, Cruz Arcila (2018) used seven teachers' narratives, field observations and interviews to see enactments of "wisdom of practice[5]" and "personal theories" (p. 67) of rural EFL teachers in different regions of Colombia. Through his interest in digging into teaching practices that were socially pertinent for the teaching and learning in contexts of rural Colombia, the author found at least four instances of personal theories that inform teacher knowledge in ELT, namely, teaching English through prayer, translanguaging, locally suited materials design, and multimodal literacy practices with students cell-phones and teachers' own resources, voices, and ideas. The author wisely suggests that there may be a great number of other teaching practices that possibly constitute what can be considered the enactments of local practices of knowledge.

In a similar vein, Quintero Polo (2019) reports on his study of the transformations of general pedagogical knowledge considering tenets of critical pedagogy, research and context sensitive practices by student-teachers of an ELT major in Bogotá. With a view that pedagogy is informed by critical theory and opposed to traditional ways of approaching teaching and learning, Quintero Polo (2019) analyzes how student-teachers demonstrate they are not "transmitters of ready-made knowledge" (p. 29) by means of diaries, interviews and analysis of their research projects. The author counters the idea

[5] The concept of "wisdom of practice" was mentioned in Shulman (1987) as one of the sources of teacher's knowledge. At that time, he asserted that "the final source of the knowledge-base is the least codified of all. It is the wisdom of practice itself, the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalization for) the practices of able teachers. (p. 11)

that knowledge should be "an external body of information for people" as this view is prone to conceptualize "the knower as separated from the known" (p, 29).

In that train of thought, he brings up the general categorization of Shulman's teachers' knowledge base to go beyond it and trace a view of knowledge as composed of "theories and practices activated by contextualization and the sharing of individual and collective dimensions" (p.30) Upon analysis of student-teachers research experiences and innovative practices, his findings suggest that student-teachers underwent a process of negotiation of their professional and academic selves with their own students, theory and what they experienced in real life. Pedagogy proved to be something socially constructed. Student-teachers' qualitative pieces of research went beyond instructional practices of ELT to focusing on knowing and understanding learners a lot better and most importantly having a view of language as a vehicle for getting something else.

Decolonially speaking, the concept of knowledge base has had a universalizing aim. What I mean is that much research, as reviewed here, is intended to accommodate local teachers' experience to the concept of a core or a base, something to anchor to. Such an intention clearly clashes with the fluctuating nature of people's identities, evolution, and standpoints. An evidence of this argument is found in four out of seven authors reviewed in this part of the document. What is apparent here is that in some Colombian contexts, teachers' knowledge has been investigated to validate what Shulman (1987, 2005) established. This realization invites to denaturalize this view which has started to change in recent years as reported in studies by Cruz Arcila (2018) and Quintero Polo (2019).

Other areas of Colombian Academia Researching Teachers' Knowledges.

Quintero Corzo, Torres Hernández and Cardona Toro (2011) from the Department of Educational Studies at Universidad de Caldas in Manizales Colombia, developed a teaching program and a subsequent contest framed within the premise that teachers' pedagogical knowledge is made observable through writing as it allows to explain scattered teaching experiences. By means of writing, the teaching practices become an intellectual endeavor. Fourteen teachers of rural, urban, marginal, secondary, and university education from different parts of Caldas Colombia participated for two years in workshops, group and individual tutoring sessions to write about their pedagogical knowledge in a narrative style. The authors pinpoint that each educational setting has its own actors and teachers who commit to write their stories manage to turn their life experiences into practical wisdom. The teacher life story contest, the authors conclude, helps pave the path to fill a gap in

the Colombian academic field: "the written memory of teachers' knowledges" (p.297). This contribution by Quintero Corzo et al (2011) invites to develop a Colombian school of thought that systematizes the knowledge production of those who work in educational settings, who might not be mainstream actors in the academic field and whose hidden knowledge could be documented.

Up to here, it was my intention to provide evidence regarding the way knowledge has been studied locally. I found most studies draw on Shulman's model of knowledge base and very few come with another paradigm. In the following section I will make a deeper analysis of the concept of knowledge base to account for its origin, evolution and a likely deconstruction.

Historizing ELT Disciplinary Knowledge,

A Critique of the Concept of Knowledge Base

English teachers' knowledge has been highly regulated epistemologically speaking. Indeed, it is a discipline that does not escape phenomena happening in general education. Postmodern critical thinker Kincheloe (2001) says that the modern view of the world infused all aspects of life and particularly education as knowledge is defined a priori. To a great extent the concept of teacher knowledge base follows this line of thought; it is an a priori category that intends to prescribe what teachers ought to know. It may entail that the act of teaching or what is required for it is generic. One wonders how the concept of teacher knowledge base has come to be what it is now. I will now attempt to historize this matter.

Donmoyer (1996) gives us some hints at the historical roots of this concept. He says that back in 1910, educational psychologist Edward Thorndike promoted psychology as a science that could possibly unveil every human behavior and describe each educational force. In the same spirit, he explains, educational administrator Elwood Cubberly (1909) compared schools to factories and children to products. These two scholars give an account of the strong modern scientific/managerial approach given to educational problem solving and the legitimation given to the scientific method as a source of knowledge about education. (Thorndike, 1910; Cubberly, 1909 cited in Donmoyer (1996)). At that time, there was already an emerging interest in finding teachers' knowledge base. For Donmoyer (1996) the Thorndike's effect lasted until the mid-70s. Thus, through this time spam, there was a heavy dependence on the so-called process-product paradigm whose main interest was to find teachers' behaviors that resulted in pupils' learning results. Donmoyer asserts that the Thorndike tradition was pervasive in influencing how research was theorized in education as its role was to find and corroborate recipes for practice and practice consisted of "systems, techniques, routines,

and standard operating procedures" (p. 96)[3]. This concept started to change as an emerging interest in teachers' thoughts started. However, the search for a knowledge base did not finish there (as we will later see in this article).

Similar descriptions are found in Beyer (1987) in his chapter "What Knowledge is of Most Worth in Teacher Education?" He exposes that in the North American tradition there was, at the time of his writing, "a reliance on psychometric analyses, isolated technical competence, linear thinking and instrumental reason" (p. 19). He describes that teacher education there, was seen "in hierarchical, patriarchal, technocratic, and psychologized terms" (p.19). The hegemonic culture in the preparation of teachers fostered "positivism and technical rationality" (p.19). What Beyer (1987) calls "technocratic rationality" (p.20) is a system that is based on:

> "competency-based teacher education, the testing of teachers, apprenticeship-based clinical teacher education, systems management approaches to curriculum development and program evaluation, behaviorist psychologies, and the nature of national accreditation and state licensing requirements" (p. 20)

To me, it is necessary to denaturalize this normativity because that tradition of *technocratic rationality* has had an immense influence in this part of the world where this vision of teachers' knowledge has also been adopted. Therefore, in what follows I would like to extend this analysis to the socio-political context of educational psychologist Lee Shulman's (1987) times in which he advanced the concept of knowledge base. It is my intention to make a clearer case on how the concept of teacher knowledge base is a product of standardization and an attempt to raise regulations of the profession more than an epistemological positioning towards what it means to teach and to know.

First, let us consider that the mid 1980s was a time of educational reform that intended to professionalize teaching *in the USA*. Shulman (1987) persuasively said that the professionalization of teaching was a way to "elevate teaching to a respected, rewarding, better rewarded occupation" (p.3) He brought up a discourse circulating at that time. It was that teaching merited professional recognition based on the idea that "standards by which the education and performance of teachers must be judged and can be raised and [be] more clearly articulated" (p.4) People who wanted the reform – Shulman says- maintained that there was such a thing as a teacher knowledge base defined as "codified, codifiable, aggregation of knowledge, skill,

[6] In my view, this sort of behaviorist influence has continued to exert power in subtle ways in ELT. The methods, for example, are in some way *techniques, routines and operating procedures* that delineate teachers' actions that are supposed to end up in learning results.

understanding, technology, ethics and dispositions of collective responsibility as well as a means for representing and communicating it" (p.4). Shulman (1987) criticized them for not clarifying what that meant saying:

> "The rhetoric regarding the knowledge base, however, rarely specifies the character of such knowledge. It does not say what teachers should know, do, understand or profess that will render teaching more than a form of individual labor, let alone be considered among the learned professions" (p.4)

Hence, it is in this context in which Shulman crafts an argument regarding content, character, and sources for a knowledge base of teaching that suggests, according to him "an answer to the question of the intellectual, practical and normative basis for the professionalization of teaching" (p.4) Framed in his locus of enunciation as a cognitive psychologist the work he did was tied to two projects, one of implementing a national board of teacher assessment and one of systematic observation of how novice teachers learned to teach. Within these parameters, Shulman (1987) asserts that:

> "Cognitive psychology research contributes to the development of understanding how the mind works to store, process, and retrieve information. Such general understanding can certainly be a source of knowledge for teachers just as the work of Piaget, Maslow, Erickson or Bloom has been and continues to be" (p. 11).

In this sense, I align with critical pedagogue Kincheloe (2001) when he reflects upon the fact that psychology has been summoned to say what teaching should entail and basically the act of teaching is not in the hands of the teachers. Instead the *scientific management* of teaching is left in the hands of outside experts, like Shulman who observed how experienced and novice teachers learned to teach in order to formulate standards. This results in the teacher saying nothing about his/her teaching and how to judge its results but being the object of study. Contemporary scholar of Shulman, Tom (1987) highlighted an underlying assumption of their epoch by reformers like the Holmes group[4]: "if only more research-derived knowledge were given to teachers, their performance would be dramatically improved" (Holmes group executive board, 1986 cited in Tom 1987, p. 9). However, Tom (1987) argued that "a more useful source of such knowledge than discipline-based study is a teacher's own inquiry into his or her classroom activities and experiences" (p.9). Still, this other approach did not resonate at that time.

[7] Schneider and Hood (1994) describe The Holmes group as an American network of university deans which intended to carry out reforms in teacher education through research in the eighties. One of their intentions was to make teaching a profession and one of its reports asks for strict standards to enter and leave teacher preparation programs. At that time, the group was criticized for being elitist and lacking substantial impact in their research.

Kincheloe (2001) explains that during the Reagan and Bush periods of presidency (1980-1993) "teachers' hands are tied and exercise no control over the curriculum. They leave the system [that is the undergrad school] without having been educated. School was intellectually irrelevant. Standardization turns out to be cognitive anesthesia" (p. 22) Still, even though Shulman (1987) acknowledges that "the great danger occurs… when a general principle is distorted into prescription, when maxim becomes mandate" (p. 11) it turned out that his model did become prescription, at least, in what concerns the ELT field.

Freeman and Johnson (1998) attempted to re-conceptualize the construct of knowledge base by transcending the historical and theoretical tenets of the 70s and 80s. They recognize the conditions under which the concept of teacher knowledge base was to be reformed. The authors recall that in the 80s, there was concern regarding the absence of an academic base for language teaching. The same that had been happening in general education. They explain that classroom inquiry was intended to establish efficient teaching actions, appropriate students' results and classroom exchanges that derived in effective language learning backed up "in teaching skills, or modeling effective teaching behaviors" (p. 398). I think there was a regime of truth which established that teachers lacked a knowledge base so that the implementation of standardization had a legitimization in English teaching as well, despite attempts made in the 80s to see teaching and learning as social, interpretive constructions prone to change as those of Clandinin (1986) cited in Freeman and Johnson (1998).

Even though the authors propose a shift from a behavioral to a constructivist view, the concept of knowledge base prevails. In fact, Freeman and Johnson (1998) appointed language teacher education to be responsible of defining what the knowledge base should be in ELT education. In that sense, they say that the judgments teacher educators make regarding knowledge management (e.g. content, pedagogies) reveal teacher educators' conceptualization on how people learn their profession and they can define "what is worth knowing and how it is best learned by those individuals who seek to become part of the profession" (p. 403) still again under the assumption that decisions made by teachers should consider effective outcomes: "teacher educators must examine and assess these choices and decisions against the effectiveness of the outcomes they engender" (p. 403) Consequently, the concept of efficacy remains with the label "teaching effectiveness". These ideas entail that it is the academy the one that defines what knowledge base is; it the one holding the power to determine it. In short, the knowledge base continues to mask an intention to police English teaching moving from one discipline to another but keeping the objective of effectiveness and the static concept of base.

In my view, indeed, it is relevant to develop a new relation to knowledge. In that sense, I agree with Freeman and Johnson (1998) when stating that the

TESOL area has not keenly intended to outline its ways of knowledge. I would add that most of them are borrowed from cognitive psychology[5]. Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) suggest that good teachers do not need to turn into experts of a knowledge base but stand in a position of analysis of their own knowledge and seeing students as knowers as well. This premise is based on the assumption that:

> "Teachers can only come to know how to teach and how to learn from teaching by being attentive to the classroom interactions… knowledge generation is both the purpose of teaching and the subject of her own research" (p. 47).

In this view, it is teachers and students who, within the classroom, outline what knowledge is. Kincheloe (2001) states that "psychological models of cognition overlook the matter of critical power, of the capacity people have to detach from tacit presuppositions, discursive practices, and power relations" (p. 38). Therefore, he proposes different ways of knowing from a critical pedagogy perspective. Kincheloe (2004) wonders what types of knowledges professional educators should possess in times when teaching is a profession constantly at risk of being deskilled. Teachers may be waving between fads, which without solid foundations, to understand past and present socio-cultural theories and advances, they could not develop an identity of their own. His locus of enunciation is that of a critical complex vision of teachers viewed as knowledge producers targeting the development of more coherent answers to what it implies to know and the moral duty behind that act. His "meta-epistemological" (p. 51) perspective aims to rethink the challenged concept of a "knowledge base for education"(p.51) Within this view, there is the recognition of different types of knowledges of education "including but not limited to empirical, experiential, normative, critical, ontological, and reflective-synthetic domains" (p. 51). The author points out that teaching is preeminently an epistemological act. Munby and Russell (1996) cited in Kincheloe (2004) argue that teaching "depends on, is grounded in, and constitutes knowledge".

Thus, teachers should develop empirical knowledge that underscores observation as a source of knowledge but more importantly they should have the awareness that research is situated, and researchers do have ideologies, disciplinary knowledge, and experiences that restrict their studies. Similarly, the knowledge produced is constructed and fragmented and does not seek universal validity. For him, "in a critical complex perspective there is not certain

[8] This is so from mainstream northern ELT epistemology and in the South, we are still aligned with that view. Thus, the work in the South is even harder to accomplish when it comes to develop an ELT knowledge of our own as we would need to dialogue with both cognitive psychology/mainstream/colonial views on in-service language teachers' knowledge and southern perspectives towards ELT.

knowledge about: what subject matter to teach; the proper way to develop a curriculum; the correct understanding of students or the right way to teach" (p. 52). Such knowledge is always elusive. Similarly, teachers' experiential knowledge is believed to be paramount.

A second kind is called by Kincheloe (2004) normative knowledge about education. It relates to "what should be" (p. 55) concerning the moral and ethical conduct of teacher educators and teachers. Normative knowledge aims to have demanding colleges/schools/departments of education and schools of various kinds. This knowledge is not randomly formed but coherent with power relations, social objectives and cultural/historical settings. Of course, the concern for moral and ethics, Kincheloe explains is grounded, for instance, in his experience with social justice research in which colleagues asked him to offer empirical proof of the validity of those worries. Thus, moral and ethical assumptions are to be examined and deliberated and actually exposed in the academic arena.

The third kind of knowledge proposed by Kincheloe (2004) is critical knowledge about education. It revolves around "the political/power-related aspects of teacher education and teaching" (p. 56). This sort of knowledge problematizes how the curriculum –knowledge selection, means to deliver information, ways to construct understanding, evaluation- are not apolitical. It is in straight antagonism to positivism that conceives of curriculum as pre-established knowledge to be given to learners. This sort of knowledge unmasks the role of education colleges in power relations derived from governmental intervention in the college life and the concealed intent to make education respond to ideologies such as neoliberalism and human capital. In a similar vein, there is an interest in unveiling how the categories of gender, class, or ethnic origin develop along the educational processes.

Another type of knowledge proposed by this author is an ontological one. It entails the ways teachers see themselves as teachers and as learners, especially what they feel they require to learn, where they must study it, the way in which this happens, and how these actions characterize their teacher persona. Here there is the underlying assumption that: "if teachers hold power to produce their own knowledges, then they are empowered to reconstruct their own consciousness" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 58).

The final type of knowledge is named experiential knowledge about education. The importance of these sort of knowledges cannot be downplayed. Their epistemology is knowingly different from empirical or academic knowledges but develop relations with other knowledges already mentioned here earlier on. They come out of the unexpected experiences that occur while teaching. Such disruptions in the established order force the practitioner to restructure his/her understanding of the situation. "Critical complex

practitioners learn to improvise and develop new ways of dealing with the new circumstances, new modes of action" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 59).

Through this perspective, it can be seen here that a conceptualization of knowledge cannot solely rely on cognitive perspectives such as the 'knowledge base'. Other realms of the human condition should also be considered, and other definitions and ways of perceiving knowledge should come into play.

A concluding remark

I constantly experience having stepped in arenas that do not represent a comfort zone in the sense that since my undergraduate school, I have been infused by colonial thought in ELT and paths to detach from such a world system are uncertain, unknown and underexplored. While reviewing literature, I realized that my own knowledge of the Latin American academia, particularly the Colombian one was scarce and thus I had to commit to investigate my own roots to fully embrace a decolonial spirit.

In this review, it was my intention to show different local academic developments and how ELT mainstream colonial authors have become the tenets of what knowledge means in the local ELT profession. I would like to finish quoting Steinberg (2015) as she best summarizes the spirit of this manuscript: "TEFL educators must understand the conditions and effects of knowledge production, while engaging in knowledge production themselves" (p. 17) This is specially the case here considering that in order to produce knowledge that represents the local realities, there is need to reflect how knowledge production has historically happened. There is need to inquire how English language teachers experience knowledge with a perspective that gives them voice as intellectuals who have been silenced (Apple, 2006). That way, we could possibly overcome abyssal thinking (Sousa Santos, 2007) that has policed the boundaries of what is considered teachers' *knowledge* and has decided what the *true* procedures, practices, contents, models, and discourses should be like in English Language Teaching grounding the ELT epistemology in a static framework. It seems to me that teachers' knowledges have historically been conceptualized from a modern vision of a fixed canon of one single knowledge-base and there is a myriad of reasons for the need to de-naturalize such a view.

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

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

Martínez, A. A., Jones, B. B., & Schmidt, C. C. (1997). Título de artículo en español [Title of article translated into English]. *Name of Journal*, *8*(3), 492-518.

Chang, F. F., & Donovan, P. P. (Eds.). (1985). *Title of work*. Location: Publisher.

Martínez, A. A. (2009). Title of chapter. In E. E. Godoy (Ed.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.

Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. doi:xx.xxxxxxxxxx

Martínez, A. A., & Jones, B. B. (2010). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, 24, pp. xx-xx. Retrieved from http://name.of.website

Chang, F. F (2000, July). *Title of paper or poster*. Paper or poster session presented at the meeting of Organization Name, Location.

Martínez, A. A. (2002, October 12). Title of article. *Name of Newspaper*, pp. B2, B6.

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

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

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

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

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

Types of Articles

Scientific or technological research article: A document which presents in detail the original results of a research project. The structure generally contains seven important sections: and abstract, an introduction, a review of the literature, the methodology, the outcomes, the conclusions, and a reference list.

Reflective article: A document which presents in detail the results of a research project from the analytical, interpretive, or critical perspective of the author, on a specific topic, with clear references to the original sources.

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

Peer Review Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Editorial Committee will decide on the publication of an article according to the following criteria: the fulfillment of the above stated conditions, methodological and conceptual rigor, originality, scientific quality, and relevance.

If the article is accepted for publication, the Editor proceeds with the editing and proofreading process. Once the final version of the article is completed, it is sent to the author for final approval, and is then forwarded to the design team for its preparation.

Relinquishing of Rights and Distribution of Published Material

The publication of articles in GIST implies that authors relinquish all rights to the article and its content. Authors also authorize GIST to promote and distribute the article via the means it deems appropriate, be it in print or electronically. For this purpose, authors should sign and send both the letter of relinquishment, and the declaration of conflict of interest upon submission of the article. These formats are available in the OJS platform of the Journal.

Code of Ethics and Good Practices

The Editorial Committee of GiST Education and Learning Research Journal, as part of its commitment to the scientific community, strives to guarantee the ethics and quality of its articles. The publication takes the code of conduct and good practice of the Committee of Ethics in Publications (COPE) as its point of reference, which defines standards for editors of scientific journals, as well as the legal and ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the sixth edition of its Style Manual.

All parties involved in the publication of the journal (Editor, Committees, Authors, and Peer Reviewers) must accept and adhere to the ethical guidelines and principles outlined here.

Editor Obligations and General Responsibilities

The Editor of the journal is responsible for ensuring strict compliance with the policies and principles of the journal. Specifically, the Editor is expected to act in an ethical manner in the following aspects:

Decision making. The Editor guides all decisions regarding articles submitted and published according to verifiable criteria of impartiality and fairness, taking into consideration the primary objectives of the journal.

The works submitted are evaluated objectively, based solely on the scientific merit of their content, without discrimination in regards to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, nationality or political persuasion.

Confidentiality. The Editor is committed to the principle of confidentiality and anonymity in communications between Editor and Authors, and Editor and Peer Evaluators. The Editor shall not disclose information related to the article or its process with third parties or colleagues not related to the journal, except in cases when an expert opinion is required, and in which the express permission for this purpose is granted by the author(s). The Editor shall not use the results of research of articles not accepted for publication for his or her own benefit or that of others, except with express permission from the author(s).

Communication. The Editor shall receive and respond to complaints, petitions, and comments in a reasonable amount of time. This also applies to the publication of corrections or modifications stemming from the editing process of published articles.

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

In the same fashion, to:

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

Other principles to follow include:

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

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

General Editor Obligations and Responsibilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Obligations and General Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers:

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

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

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

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

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

Additional Information

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

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International: (57-1) 281-1777 ext. 1296; In Colombia: (05-1) 281-1777 ext.1296

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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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