

\*  
Cibele Krause Lemke  
Patricia Núñez Mercado  
Gabriela Guadalupe Estrada Sánchez  
\* Oscar Manuel Narváez Trejo

DIÁLOGOS BRASIL – MÉXICO:  
\*  
TENDENCIAS EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS

apprehendere  
editora

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**DIÁLOGOS BRASIL – MÉXICO:  
TENDENCIAS EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS**

**1ª edição**

**Apprehendere  
Guarapuava  
2023**

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Dados Internacionais da Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)  
Bibliotecária responsável: Vânia Jacó da Silva CRB 1544-9

D536 Diálogos Brasil-México: tendencias em la enseñanza de lenguas / Cibeles Krause Lemke[et al.].– Guarapuava: Apprehendere, 2023.  
240 p.

Bibliografia  
ISBN 978-65-88217-58-0

1. Lenguas. 2. Inglés – Enseñaza. 3. Español - Enseñanza. 4. Sociolingüística. 4. Educación Intercultural Bilingüe. I. Lemke, Cibeles Krause. II. Núñez Mercado, Patricia. III. Estrada Sánchez, Gabriela Guadalupe. IV. Narváez Trejo Oscar Manuel V. Título.

CDD 20. ed. 407

#### FICHA TÉCNICA

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Capa: Luciano Ortiz

Imagem da capa: freepik.com

Diagramação: Luciano Ortiz

Editores: Isis Lenoah Ortiz e Luciano Ortiz

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2023

APPREHENDERE

(42) 98405-7603

Av. Manoel Ribas, 2028

Sala 01 - Centro - Guarapuava - PR

www.apprehendereeditora.com

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## Presentación

Este libro es resultado de la cooperación académica establecida entre el Programa de Posgrado en Educación (PPGE) de UNICENTRO y la Facultad de Lenguas de la Universidad Veracruzana, México por medio del Grupo de Investigación Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés (Universidad Veracruzana) en colaboración con el Cuerpo Académico en Educación Integral (CADEI) de la Universidad de Quintana Roo, y el Grupo de Investigación Lengua, Inmigración e Identidad de la Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste de Paraná, Brasil.

En esta sección nos dedicamos a presentar cada uno dos los capítulos que componen esta obra. Los trabajos se vinculan a la temática de la investigación en la enseñanza de lenguas y tratan de diferentes miradas relacionadas al proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas, en diferentes contextos brasileños y mexicanos.

Empezamos por el trabajo de Olga Irene Zitácuaro Ameca. En el primer capítulo, titulado "*¿Por qué se cometen errores en gramática? La perspectiva de alumnos universitarios como aprendientes y usuarios de la lengua inglesa*", la autora discurre acerca de las percepciones que tienen los alumnos del programa educativo Lengua Inglesa acerca de las razones por las cuales se cometen errores en la segunda lengua. La investigación aborda la temática de la gramática normativa dentro del aprendizaje de lenguajes, y de las interferencias de la lengua materna durante ese proceso. La investigación tiene un enfoque mixto, con técnicas de recogida de datos cuantitativos y cualitativos (encuesta y entrevista). Por medio de las encuestas, la autora obtuvo conocimiento más profundo acerca de los participantes, los cuales utilizaron de seudónimos para preservar sus identidades. Las entrevistas fueron divididas en grupos y realizadas por videoconferencia, con el fin de discutir acerca de los errores o fallas cometidos durante el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa. La investigación demuestra que todos los participantes son plenamente conscientes de los errores cometidos durante el proceso de aprendizaje de dicha lengua, y los errores que comúnmente se presentan, son aquellos que tienen que ver con el vocabulario y la gramática.

Mauri da Cruz de Morais y Loremi Loregian-Penkal, en "*Beliefs and*

*attitudes regarding teaching Talian as a heritage language: A sociolinguistic analysis of teaching material Talian par cei grandi gramàtica e stòria*”, nos llevan a la región sur de Brasil, en donde existe una gran diversidad lingüística y cultural, y en donde el italiano, en específico su variante conocida como Talian, se posiciona como Referencia Cultural Brasileña al lado de lenguas indígenas como la de los Asurini do Trocará y Guarani Mbya. Basándose en los principios teóricos y metodológicos que dominan la investigación en variación sociolingüística, y usando métodos tanto directos como indirectos, proponen investigar las creencias y actitudes lingüísticas de estudiantes en el proyecto Cucagna-Scola de Talian, en especial aquéllas que promueven la permanencia del Talian y las relacionadas con aspectos sociolingüísticos de la estructura gramatical de la lengua. Los resultados preliminares parecen apuntar hacia una actitud positiva con respecto a materiales con un enfoque comunicativo, indicando que la gramática y el enfoque comunicativo van de la mano. Dado el gran número de organizaciones que promueven el Talian respondiendo a la alta demanda existente por aprenderlo, se destaca el logro de Unicentro por ser la primera universidad que ofrece un curso de un idioma de inmigración.

En su capítulo “*Case study of the compulsory ELT Programme at the Autonomous University of Coahuila campus Torreón*”, Rosa Cecilia Quintana Saldaña y Marisol Fernández Zetina presentan cómo se implementa y se lleva a cabo el programa de Inglés obligatorio en la universidad de Coahuila y cómo tres actores principales de la educación (estudiantes, profesores y autoridades) lo perciben. Mediante un proyecto de metodología mixta, las autoras evalúan el programa de inglés desde diferentes ángulos tales como el perfil de los profesores, las actualizaciones que se han hecho al programa de lenguas y el alcance de cada uno de los profesores según su disponibilidad y horas dedicadas al inglés. A través de cuestionarios a los estudiantes y autoridades y de sesiones de entrevista con un grupo focal de profesores se presentan las gráficas del número de estudiantes que conoce o desconoce ciertos aspectos del programa de enseñanza del inglés así como las percepciones de los demás participantes acerca del mismo. Los resultados indican que existen varios aspectos positivos y que, en general, los participantes se encuentran satisfechos con el programa de inglés. Además, este proyecto permitirá el mejoramiento de ciertos aspectos relacionados con las políticas de acceso, los materiales y metodología así como las condiciones laborales de los profesores.

Alexia Alejandra Cárdenas Zavala y María del Rocío Domínguez Gaona, en "Creencias y prácticas áulicas en la enseñanza del inglés en una universidad pública en México", investigan, analizan y describen, las prácticas pedagógicas del aprendizaje y enseñanza de la lengua inglesa en la Universidad Estatal de Sonora (UES), dicha institución, fue la primera en México en crear vínculos con el Colegio Canadiense para la incorporación de la plataforma SmrtEnglish a su metodología de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas. El estudio objetiva también, el análisis acerca de la relación entre las prácticas áulicas y las creencias de los profesores sobre el aprendizaje del inglés y el uso de la tecnología en la universidad. Las autoras subrayan la importancia de la lengua inglesa dentro de México, siendo ésta indispensable y necesaria para las relaciones internacionales, los negocios y el sector laboral. Utilizando métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos para búsqueda y análisis de información, la investigación es de carácter mixto, descriptivo y exploratorio, con la utilización de encuesta y observación como fuente de obtención de datos. Los resultados describen las relaciones, creencias y prácticas de los profesores dentro del aula, también destacan el perfil docente, además de señalar aspectos pendientes por trabajar, con base en el modelo seguido por la institución de enseñanza.

Rosangela Kuspiosz Calliari y Cibele Krause Lemke, en "Enseñanza de Español en Municipios Fronterizos entre Brasil y Argentina, Educación Intercultural Bilingüe", presentan un estudio de investigación acerca de la oferta de la enseñanza de Lengua Española en las escuelas estatales de Paraná, después de la derogación de la Ley 11.161/2005, con enfoque principal en las escuelas municipales y estatales paranaenses de las ciudades que hacen frontera con Argentina. Caracterizada como multimetodológica, tuvo como objetivo, analizar si en las escuelas estatales/municipales de línea de frontera entre Paraná y Argentina, existe de hecho, la implementación de la enseñanza de la lengua española. Las investigaciones fueron hechas en las secretarías de educación de las ciudades de línea de frontera y también junto a la Secretaría de Educación de Paraná, a través de un cuestionario enviado por correo electrónico. Los resultados de este trabajo apuntaron un declive con relación a la oferta del español dentro de los Centros de Idiomas Extranjeros Modernos de las escuelas estatales de Paraná en los últimos cinco años. Con relación a las escuelas de las ciudades de línea de frontera, la lengua inglesa sobrepone a la española para ser enseñada bajo la justificación de su hegemonía. Concluyendo



que en regiones de frontera, el aprendizaje de la lengua española sería imprescindible, puesto que los alumnos tienen contacto directo con dicha lengua, pero son privados del aprendizaje de la misma, debido a la implementación de políticas educativas restrictivas.

Lilia Sulema Bórquez Morales, Abigail Carretero Hernández, Martha G. Hernández Alvarado y Tomás Hernández Ángeles, en "Exploring English language education worldwide throughout a pandemic: The need for an Integrable Pedagogy", nos invitan a la reflexión acerca del impacto de la pandemia de COVID-19 en el área de la educación de la lengua inglesa. En la presente investigación se analizan los retos y oportunidades creadas por la pandemia centrándose en la enseñanza del inglés a nivel superior. Asimismo, los hallazgos ponen de manifiesto las diferentes vivencias experimentadas por maestros en activo. Además, brinda ejemplos de maestros de nivel medio superior y de universidades de otros países. Se identifican también los retos de la enseñanza aprendizaje durante la pandemia y las estrategias a considerar en la enseñanza post-pandemia. Mediante la entrevista semiestructurada se logró conocer el pensar de los profesores de lenguas en el cual se manifiesta que, en general, las acciones tomadas durante la pandemia son positivas y efectivas. Los participantes dan cuenta de los aspectos a considerar para alcanzar una educación de mejor calidad que responda a las nuevas realidades dentro de lo que destaca la integración de la tecnología en el proceso de la enseñanza aprendizaje, la integración de nuevos materiales y métodos de enseñanza, el apoyo entre docentes y una pedagogía con justicia social. Dichos aspectos coadyuvan de manera directa una pedagogía más integral.

En el capítulo "Mexican ELT Policies Beyond Frontiers: Case Study of Migrant Children at Dolores Gonzales Elementary School", Annie Marie Gallegos, Josué Cinto Morales y Maribel Guzmán Mijangos presentan un estudio de caso en donde se analizan las respuestas de cinco niños mexicanos en nivel básico insertos en un programa bilingüe. En este texto se aborda el tema del bilingüismo, biculturalismo, biliteracidad y la teoría de sistemas. Es un proyecto cualitativo donde se obtuvo la información por medio de observaciones y entrevistas. Los resultados obtenidos se analizaron y discutieron de acuerdo a cinco componentes básicos de un sistema educativo como son información recibida, proceso de transformación, producción, retroalimentación y entorno. Los hallazgos muestran que la enseñanza del

inglés en México varía de casi inexistente a un proceso de traducción constante, que el maestro no cuenta con el dominio necesario para apoyar a los estudiantes o que no se establece un aprendizaje significativo. Sin embargo, en el programa bilingüe en USA, los estudiantes perciben que el idioma español es promovido con más frecuencia que el inglés. Con este estudio se puede expresar que México aún necesita reconstruir sus políticas de enseñanza de idiomas para que se pueda crear un proceso de transformación real.

En su capítulo "Physical learning settings' impact on students' participation in Emergency Remote Teaching lessons", Fernando Hernández Calixto y Patricia Núñez Mercado presentan un estudio cualitativo de investigación-acción realizado durante la pandemia por COVID-19, la cual forzó a instituciones académicas en todo el mundo a suspender la instrucción presencial e implementar la Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia (ERE). El estudio se centra en las condiciones del entorno físico para el aprendizaje en casa durante la pandemia, y cómo éste afecta la motivación de los estudiantes y su participación en sesiones sincrónicas en línea, una de las opciones más comunes durante la ERE. Al tratarse de un cambio repentino, incluso estudiantes con recursos suficientes, como los participantes del estudio, tuvieron problemas en un principio para reconocer la importancia de un espacio adecuado en casa para el aprendizaje. A través de observaciones durante las sesiones sincrónicas de una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera en una escuela privada, y entrevistas semi-estructuradas a los estudiantes, se diseña, implementa y evalúa un plan de acción en el que haciendo conscientes a los estudiantes de la importancia de un entorno físico adecuado y apoyándolos a crearlo, se logran superar los obstáculos derivados de nuevos distractores emergentes durante la ERE, y desarrollar estrategias para mejorar el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua en el marco de este momento histórico.

El capítulo "Teaching methods to teach Spanish to multilingual foreigners at SEJUDEM in Tapachula, Chiapas" de la autoría de Pablo Moreno Arenas, Elsa Yolanda Cruz Maldonado y Adrián de Jesús Girón Chávez no describe un estudio cuyo objetivo fue el de identificar la mejor manera de enseñar español a un grupo de inmigrantes localizados en la frontera con Guatemala. Este estudio de caso de corte cualitativo usó encuestas abiertas como medio de recolección de datos. 20 participantes expresaron sus opiniones sobre el curso implementado por los investigadores. Éstos concluyen que el

Enfoque Comunicativo en conjunto con actividades lúdicas es la mejor manera de facilitar el aprendizaje dado que responden a las necesidades y a los estilos y estrategias empleadas por este grupo de inmigrantes.

Teniendo en cuenta que el aprendizaje autónomo ha sido el foco de interés entre investigadores y académicos en las últimas décadas, el capítulo *Teaching practices that promote autonomous learning*, de Secundino Isabeles Flores, María Magdalena Cass Zubiría y Raphaël Hubert Elie Sebire presenta los hallazgos de un estudio cualitativo dirigido a identificar las prácticas que un grupo de profesores de EFL implementan en las clases de idiomas para fomentar y ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar las habilidades que necesitan para ser autónomos en su aprendizaje. El equipo de investigadores realizó un estudio de caso cualitativo en el que se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas con 5 docentes para recopilar datos en un programa de formación docente en una Universidad Estatal de México. Los resultados indican que los participantes emplearon diferentes prácticas para promover el aprendizaje autónomo. Los investigadores los clasificaron en tres áreas diferentes: aprendizaje de EFL, práctica de EFL y evaluación, lo que los llevó a concluir que los maestros implementaron prácticas que parecían promover el aprendizaje autónomo.

En el capítulo *The Regulation of Plurilingual Education in Brazil: First Impressions on the National Curricular Guidelines*, Fernanda Seidel Bortolotti y Cibele Krause-Lemke analizan las políticas educativas brasileñas. La investigación documental discutida en esta aportación combina una revisión bibliográfica que rastrea las primeras impresiones con respecto a las *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Plurilíngue (DCNEP)* y su impacto en la enseñanza del inglés y las repercusiones en los otros idiomas. Los resultados del análisis hecho denotan una tendencia en el documento a dirigir el apoyo a idiomas extranjeros específicos, a pesar de que tiene la palabra "plurilingüe" en su título. Además, se observa la lentitud del proceso de aprobación y se describen las mejoras futuras que son necesarias para la legislación nacional.

El capítulo de Gloria Carolina Pallanez Dávila, titulado "Competency-Based Program in Higher Education. Results: Compliance and Challenges", aborda el tema de los modelos educativos por competencias, resultado de la globalización, y el cómo las políticas neoliberales impuestas derivadas de la misma han impactado la agencia docente a nivel superior, pues son los docentes

quienes tienen la última palabra en cuanto a la toma de decisiones sobre lo que ocurre en el salón de clases. El estudio de caso cualitativo se llevó a cabo en un programa de licenciatura en enseñanza de inglés en una universidad estatal en el noroeste de México. Aunque la investigación arrojó resultados en distintos niveles, este capítulo reporta en particular sólo una de las categorías emergentes denominada “un modelo innovador dentro de un marco tradicional”, como los mismos participantes la llamaron refiriéndose a la falta de flexibilidad del sistema educativo mexicano ante lo propuesto por un modelo educativo por competencias. Se recolectó la información a través de observaciones de clase, entrevistas semi-estructuradas y productos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, utilizando un enfoque de análisis del discurso crítico. Los resultados indican que el término “flexibilidad” se acomoda a intereses de las autoridades educativas y complica los procesos de aprendizaje y de enseñanza, incluyendo los procesos de evaluación del estudiante, afectando a su vez los sistemas de evaluación y contratación docente.

Esperamos que el contenido de esta obra pueda traer contribuciones a las reflexiones y a la investigación en lenguas – maternas, extranjeras, de herencia y que pueda fomentar nuevos procesos y experiencias de investigación, teniendo la cooperación internacional entre universidades como un eje importante a ser movilizado. El equipo coordinador de esta obra congratula a todos los autores y autoras y cree fuertemente en el fortalecimiento de la cooperación entre nuestras universidades y entre nuestros países.

*Los coordinadores de la obra*

# CAPÍTULO 1

¿Por qué se cometen errores en gramática? La perspectiva de alumnos universitarios como aprendientes y usuarios de la lengua inglesa

Olga Irene Zitácuaro Ameca  
ozitacuaro@uv.mx  
Universidad Veracruzana

## Introducción

Es más común de lo que uno cree escuchar a la gente en general decir que no les gusta el inglés porque es muy difícil o porque no se pronuncia como se escribe, según he escuchado. Incluso en la misma licenciatura, de personas que están ahí por decisión, he escuchado decir cosas similares. Entre las cosas que mencionan que les disgusta sobre la lengua (más bien que les causan cierta dificultad) está la gramática.

Lo anterior puede deberse a varias razones, entre ellas podría mencionar los estilos de aprendizaje, los intereses personales, la metodología del maestro a cargo, y muchas otras que pueden mencionar los alumnos o los compañeros docentes. Éste es tema de interés de muchas reuniones de profesores.

Siendo el aula el lugar en el que regularmente se da el primer encuentro entre un alumno y la gramática, o cualquier otro tema referente a una segunda lengua, es en donde, como docentes, nos enfrentamos a los diferentes contextos de los que provienen los alumnos. Están aquellos que han contado con los medios para aprender una segunda lengua y ponerla en práctica en un contexto real, y, por otro lado, están aquellos que han aprendido la lengua en la escuela, llámese primaria, secundaria, prepa, y el input con el que cuentan proviene de películas, canciones y demás elementos encontrados en internet, y el output es aquel de repetir las letras de algunas canciones, pláticas con algún conocido de otro país. Indistintamente, alumnos provenientes de los dos contextos mencionados cometen errores gramaticales y/o de vocabulario, desde los más básicos a los más elaborados.

Dedicarse a la docencia es, creo yo, más sinuoso de lo que pareciera ser a veces. Álvarez (2012) lo describe de la siguiente manera: “con frecuencia se habla de la relación teoría-práctica, de coherencia pedagógica, de correspondencia entre el decir, el pensar y el hacer... y un sinnúmero de denominaciones más empleadas para referirse al complejo territorio de las conexiones que establece el profesorado entre el conocimiento educativo y la realidad escolar” (p. 384). Y es que, enfrentarse a un sinnúmero de estilos de aprendizajes, ideas, expectativas, creencias, intereses, y metas, entre otras, a veces complica el alcanzar los objetivos de clase.

Uno de esos objetivos es, por supuesto, hacer que los alumnos produzcan en un ambiente de tranquilidad, que les haga sentirse con plena libertad de hablar, de participar sin el temor de ser criticados o juzgados. En palabras de Santacruz (2015): “es el maestro quien debe facilitar las estrategias de aprendizaje y guiar el aprendizaje significativo bajo procesos de reflexión en la acción” (p. 11).

Lo anterior se dice fácil, pero no lo es. Por ejemplo, puede haber una planeación muy trabajada, pero una vez que se quiere poner en práctica todo lo planeado, por alguna razón, desconocida y frustrante para muchos de los que nos dedicamos a la enseñanza, simplemente no funciona. En ocasiones puede tener mucho mejor resultado alguna actividad improvisada que una planeada. No obstante, en este momento se involucran muchos otros factores entre los que destacan los estilos de aprendizaje, intereses, incluso el estado de ánimo de los alumnos. Cualquiera de ellos, lo suficientemente poderoso como para que la planeación más soñada, simplemente no funcione.

De esta situación, lo que sigue siendo una constante es que el error existe, y no solo en alumnos de nivel principiante, sino en los de intermedio y avanzado. Comúnmente, el error es algo que, como docentes, buscamos eliminar con la intención de que los alumnos sean hablantes competentes de una segunda lengua. Al respecto, las palabras de De la Torre (2000, citado en Guerrero et al., 2013) son las siguientes:

La consideración negativa del error es un indicador más del paradigma positivista. Siendo el éxito la eficacia, el producto, el criterio desde el que se analiza el aprendizaje, resulta natural que todo elemento entorpecedor como es el error debe evitarse (...) un punto de vista coherente si se entiende la instrucción como resultado. El error al igual que la interferencia, son estudiados

como obstáculos, como situaciones negativas que es preciso evitar. (p. 363-364)

En contraste, las tendencias pedagógicas actuales conciben al error como una oportunidad de aprendizaje, haciendo hincapié en la experimentación del aprendiente, en que pueda conocer algo viviéndolo, y que de esas vivencias pueda existir un razonamiento propio que le lleve al aprendizaje mismo (Cabrera, 2015). Consecuentemente, el error puede ser considerado un elemento de utilidad tanto para el alumno como para el profesor.

Aunado a lo anterior, la vida diaria nos dice que aún en presencia de error, se pueden ejecutar muchas acciones. Corder (1991, citado en Alexopolou, 2005) lo afirma de la siguiente manera: "vivimos en un mundo imperfecto y, en consecuencia, los errores existirán siempre por muchos esfuerzos que hagamos" (p. 76).

Esta investigación pretende dar luz sobre las percepciones que tienen los alumnos del programa educativo Lengua Inglesa sobre las razones por las cuales se cometen errores en la segunda lengua. Conocer el origen desde su óptica como aprendientes y usuarios del inglés, podría coadyuvar en la implementación de nuevas estrategias que impacten más efectivamente en la erradicación de tal error.

## **Revisión de la Literatura**

Difícilmente se puede hablar de ser competente en una segunda lengua sin mencionar la gramática. Hay numerosos estudios que han probado que el empleo correcto de las reglas gramaticales tienen un efecto positivo en el aprendizaje de cualquier idioma. A continuación se detallan algunos aspectos referentes a ello.

"La enseñanza de la gramática es clave y fundamental en el proceso de adquisición de una lengua extranjera" (Martín, 2008, p. 30). Desde el punto de vista de varios autores, el conocimiento y dominio de la gramática es indispensable para ser competente en un idioma, incluso se ha llegado a decir que "una persona puede memorizar todos los morfemas, palabra y expresiones

idiomáticas del diccionario de un nuevo lenguaje con sus pronunciaciones y significados, pero no es capaz de hablar o escribir en esa segunda lengua, a menos que se sepa su gramática" (Pyles & Algeo, 1970, citado por Morales, 2017, p. 12).

Así mismo, citan Padilla y Escaldera (2021), "Hymes (1973) considera que "para lograr la competencia comunicativa, es necesario incluir tanto las reglas de la gramática, como las reglas del uso de las mismas y la define como el conocimiento de reglas para entender y producir el significado referencial y social de la lengua" (p. 73). Se entiende en la anterior cita, que el conocimiento de las reglas gramaticales no es suficiente para ejecutarlas de manera correcta. Un alumno puede conocer una regla de gramática y aún así cometer errores al tratar de utilizarla en algún contexto comunicativo.

Siendo la gramática de tal envergadura, vienen a colación dos términos importantes en la adquisición de la misma: precisión y fluidez.

En todo proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de una lengua nos encontramos con dos cuestiones clave: la precisión y la fluidez. Para lo segundo no necesitamos un gran conocimiento de gramática: podemos hacernos entender incluso cometiendo grandes y significativos errores gramaticales; sin embargo, para lo primero sí tenemos que poseer un buen nivel de gramática. (Martín, 2008, p. 30)

Mucho depende del objetivo la importancia que le demos a cada uno de los elementos arriba mencionados. Si solamente queremos darnos a entender y poder entender lo que alguien nos dice, por ejemplo, al viajar, podemos prescindir de la precisión; es decir, del correcto uso de la gramática. No obstante, si nuestro objetivo radica en lo académico o lo profesional, la precisión gramatical es sustantiva.

*Interferencias e interlengua como procesos fundamentales del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua.*

Es de conocimiento general que, en cualquier contexto, en el camino hacia un objetivo, se pueden presentar obstáculos, y la adquisición de un idioma no es la excepción. En este apartado del trabajo se explicará de que se tratan las interferencias lingüística y gramatical.

En un estudio sobre interferencias gramaticales, se menciona que "la



interferencia lingüística se da cuando se utilizan elementos de la lengua materna para hablar o escribir en otra" (Soler 2011, citado por Morales, 2017, p. 19). De la anterior se entiende que la interferencia lingüística es básicamente cuando alguien recurre al español primeramente para expresarse en inglés. Lo anterior pudiera mermar el desempeño de un alumno de nivel principiante, ya que las gramáticas española e inglesa son visiblemente contrastantes.

Morales (2017) nos explica que hay dos tipos de interferencias lingüísticas: interna y externa; "interna cuando existen alteraciones estructurales y morfológicas dentro de una misma lengua y externa cuando se da la influencia de estructuras conocidas en un idioma durante el proceso de aprendizaje de otros idiomas" (p. 17) . Lo que quiere decir que un alumno en proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma, podría cometer errores de inglés en inglés, o en inglés por recurrir al español.

Es en este punto donde se podría lanzar la siguiente pregunta: ¿Cómo incide la lengua materna en la adquisición? Y, a este respecto, Adjémian (1992) aseveró, secundando a Chomsky, que el utilizar la lengua materna (L1) es válido en el sentido de que un aprendiente puede recurrir a ella para construir nuevas reglas gramaticales, en este caso de una L2.

Además, Selinker (1972) destacó que el sistema de lenguaje creado por los aprendientes, que además es único, forma parte del aprendizaje de la lengua meta. A este proceso lo denominó interlengua. La interlengua es el estado intermedio entre la L1 y la L2. Selinker (1972) también dijo que este proceso es inevitable en el cual se crea la interlengua, se desarrolla, para luego corregirse. En sus propias palabras: "un sistema lingüístico separado sobre cuya existencia podemos hacer hipótesis en el output de un alumno al intentar producir la norma de la lengua meta" (Selinker, 1972, citado en Li, 2020, p. 20).

Es preciso no confundirse y pensar en la interlengua como una combinación de lenguas, ya que no es ni la lengua madre ni la meta, sino un sistema de lenguaje independiente. Asimismo, es un sistema que se modifica paralelamente al trabajo y progresos y necesidad de comunicación del aprendiente. Por ejemplo, estando inmerso en un contexto donde la lengua meta forma parte de la cotidianidad, la interlengua del aprendiente durará menos que la de aquel que se encuentra en un contexto donde utiliza su lengua materna la mayor parte del tiempo.

Selinker (1972, citado en Li, 2020) creía que la interlengua se compone de una serie de procesos gramaticales psicológicos que los alumnos utilizan para comunicarse. La interlengua para él es un lenguaje que tiene las características del lenguaje humano, y el alumno al ser su creador, las puede emplear para hablar en lenguas nuevas.

Como se puede observar, el error gramatical ha sido estudiado desde décadas atrás. Ya sea como algo que debe evitarse o como parte esencial del proceso de aprendizaje, sigue formando parte del rompecabezas. Es por ese evidente valor que nos interesa conocer la perspectiva de los alumnos, respecto a lo que los lleva a cometer errores en inglés.

## **Metodología**

Esta investigación tiene un enfoque mixto, debido a que se aplicaron métodos tanto cuantitativos como cualitativos. Fueron empleadas en la elaboración de este trabajo, la encuesta y la entrevista. La palabra encuesta, dice Dörnyei (2003), es un término con el que la mayoría de nosotros estamos familiarizados, y agrega que no existe una definición como tal de ella por la simple razón de que no todas las preguntas lucen como preguntas. Es decir, carecen de signos de interrogación. Estas encuestas son llamadas de diferentes maneras. Por ejemplo, inventarios, tests, baterías, listas de cotejo, cuestionarios, por mencionar algunas. Por otro lado, Nahoum (1985, citado en García, Martínez, Martín, s.f.) define a la entrevista como "un encuentro de carácter privado y cordial, donde una persona se dirige a otra y cuenta su historia o da la versión de los hechos, respondiendo a preguntas relacionadas con un problema" (p. 6).

Ambas herramientas fueron elegidas por ser diferentes en su naturaleza y principios, pero tan complementarias una con la otra en la práctica investigativa. Para muchas personas, el contar con números que puedan proporcionar luz sobre un tema dado es de suma importancia, lo cual se puede deber a su perfil profesional o a su perspectiva simplemente. Por otro lado, obtener información hablada a partir de preguntas, parece ser una manera muy humana, y, por ende, genuina de conocer las ideas de alguien.

En ese sentido, la etnografía jugó un papel fundamental en este trabajo. Hymes (1993) que "para la investigación etnográfica, la validez depende

comúnmente del conocimiento preciso de los significados" (p. 182). Conocer de primera mano el programa educativo en el este estudio fue realizado, me ayudó a comprender ciertas cuestiones contextuales que emergieron de la aplicación de las herramientas utilizadas.

A diferencia de la encuesta, que fue enviada y devuelta vía correo electrónico, en el caso de la encuesta, aunque fue ejecutada en línea, fue esencial mostrarme siempre dispuesta a escuchar sin juzgar y con una actitud ecuánime e imparcial, interesada en lo que ellos contestaban, siempre procurando que no hubiese tiempos muertos como esperar demasiado después de que la discusión de alguna pregunta ya hubiera concluido.

Cabe aclarar, en este punto, que la elección de ambas herramientas obedeció a la intención de poder otorgar a los participantes la oportunidad de contestar individual y libremente, escribiendo tanto quisieran sobre los cuestionamiento plasmados en la encuesta, pero también de, mediante la entrevista, poder socializar sus ideas y saberse acompañados, o incluso comprendidos, en emociones o experiencias vividas al utilizar y aprender la lengua inglesa.

El hecho de que en tales herramientas no se etiqueten las respuestas como correctas o incorrectas, representó una valiosa oportunidad al poder brindar a los informantes la tranquilidad y confianza absolutas para expresarse manifiestamente.

El primer paso fue la encuesta, la cual constó de 13 preguntas, que permitieron conocer un poco de los antecedentes de los participantes. Los puntos que tocan las preguntas son: si fue o no Lengua Inglesa su primera opción de licenciatura, la razón por la que estudian inglés, qué les gusta más y menos del PE, sus perspectivas sobre la importancia -o carencia de ella- de las macro y micro habilidades, si consideran o no adecuado que su maestro de inglés les corrija algún uso inapropiado de la lengua y, por último, preguntarles qué es lo que ellos hacen para asegurarse de que han aprendido correctamente alguna regla gramatical. Cabe agregar que en esta encuesta se les solicitaron algunos datos personales, además de un homónimo elegido por ellos mismos. De esa manera serán referidos en el apartado de resultados.

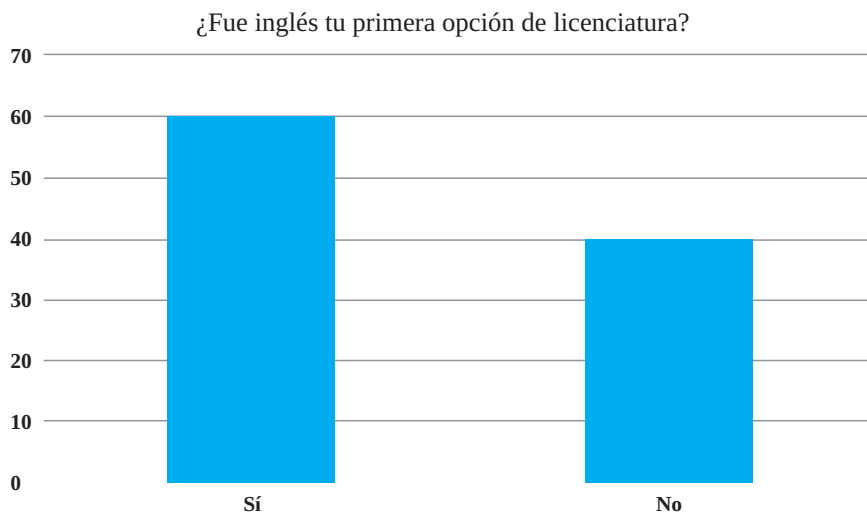
Posterior a ello, se hizo uso, vía videoconferencia, de la entrevista grupal. Se realizaron tres por el número de alumnos, quienes fueron divididos

en dos grupos de tres, y un grupo de cuatro. En tales grupos hubo siempre hombres y mujeres. Esta entrevista constó solamente de tres preguntas, con la intención de propiciar la discusión sobre los errores o faltas que ellos, como alumnos, más cometen en la lengua, qué hacen cuando percatan y por último la razón que los lleva a cometerlos.

## Resultados

A continuación, y de manera separada se presentan los resultados de este estudio. Primeramente, aquellos de la encuesta, y después, los de la entrevista. Encuesta

Para el 60% de los encuestados, inglés fue la primera opción de licenciatura, y dentro de las razones que les llevaron al estudio de la lengua inglesa, se encuentra el interés de superación laboral o personal por el deseo de viajar o trabajar en el extranjero, así como el talento innato que dos de ellos expresamente expresaron tener.

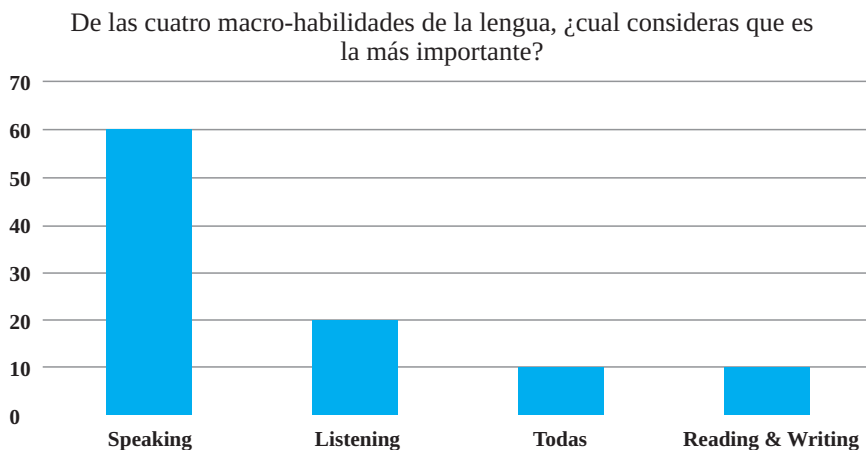


Respecto a lo que más les agrada de la carrera (Lengua Inglesa), los hallazgos arrojan que es lo relacionado con la lengua, así como inglés y lingüística, el hecho de percibir sus estudios superiores como elemento de esparcimiento por las relaciones interpersonales que se forman en la convivencia diaria. Además de las materias de docencia y cultura, y por último,

la oportunidad que representa el ser un profesional de la lengua inglesa y las diferentes opciones para ejercer, una vez egresando de la universidad.

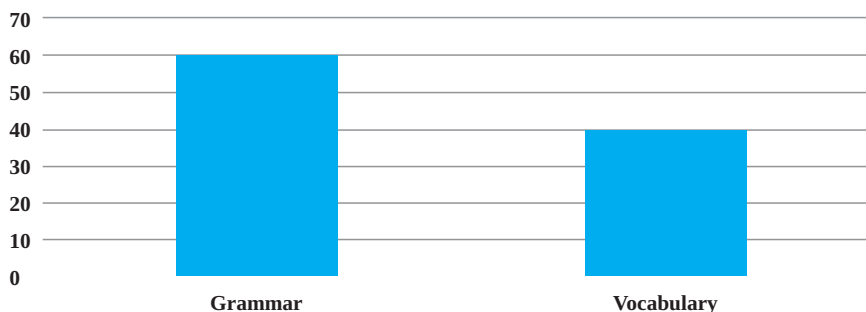
Por otro lado, dentro de lo que no es del completo agrado de los participantes, se encontraron algunas experiencias educativas, que por supuesto obedecen a sus intereses y gustos. Aunado a ello, el hecho de que no se propicie suficiente práctica de la lengua, entre otras cuestiones de índole administrativa.

Los encuestados consideran que las habilidad más importantes en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua es la producción oral, afirmando que "es indispensable la comunicación hablada" y que el objetivo de aprender una nueva lengua es el de poder comunicarnos". Además, agregó Zell que "es una habilidad donde crear oraciones es puesto a prueba" . Al respecto de listening, por ejemplo, comentaron que en un contexto real es muy importante porque debes entenderlo. Y de las otras, solo mencionan que son complementarias para el dominio de una segunda lengua.



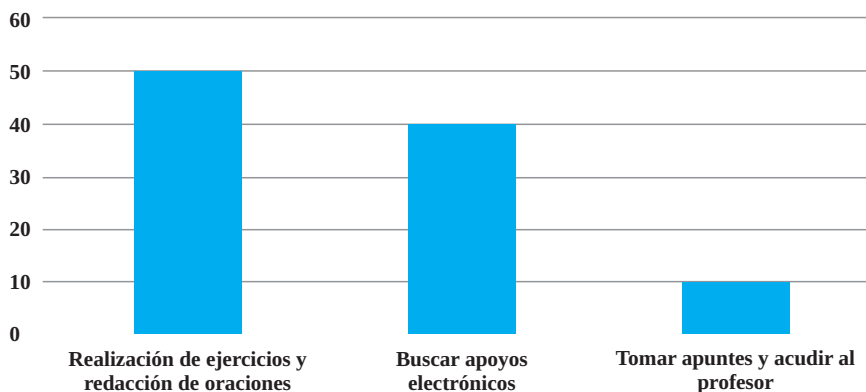
Concerniente a las micro-habilidades (gramática y vocabulario), el 60% considera que es la gramática la más importante porque les permite estructurar y, al ser tan diferente al español, consideran de importancia conocerla y aplicarla de manera correcta. Sin embargo, todos reconocen el peso que ésta tiene en el aprendizaje de una lengua.

De estas 2 macro-habilidades, ¿cual consideras que es más importante?



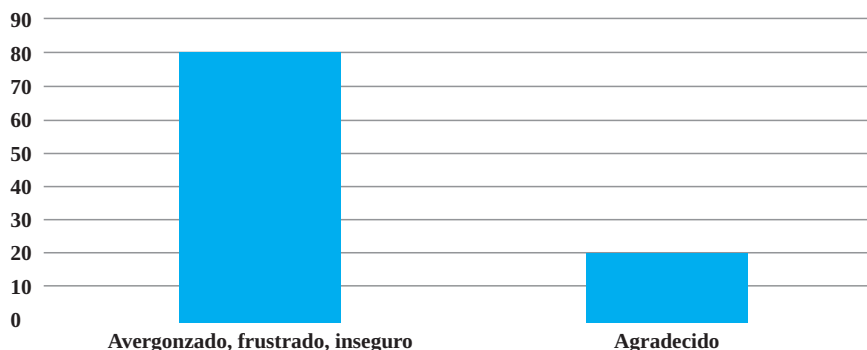
Para asegurarse de que han comprendido una regla gramatical y que la aplican de manera adecuada, los participantes emplean como estrategias principales: la realización de ejercicios en sus libros de texto o internet y la redacción de sus propias oraciones, la búsqueda de apoyos en formato electrónico para confirmar que son correctas, y, por último, el recurrir a su profesor para solicitar otras fuentes de repaso.

Cuando te presentan una regla gramatical, ¿qué haces para asegurarte de que la entiendes y aplicas correctamente?



Con respecto a ser corregidos por su maestro al cometer errores, el 80% de los alumnos expresó experimentar emociones negativas. No obstante, de ese porcentaje, más de la mitad mencionó que el sentimiento negativo solo es inicial, ya que comprenden que el docente los corrige con un propósito fundamentado.

Si tu maestro te corrige algún error gramatical en el aula,  
¿cómo te sientes?



Todos los encuestados aseguraron que es necesario que les corrijan. Entre las razones que emergen se encuentran las siguientes:

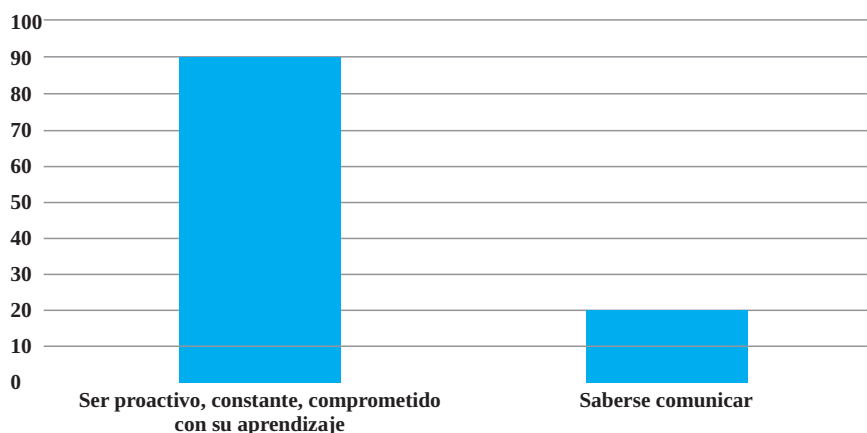
“Si algo no se corrige a tiempo, suele convertirse en un mal hábito”

“Casi todos terminaremos siendo maestros (...) y mal aprender algo que te va a ayudar, no está bien”

"Se debe corregir para prevenir la fosilización"

Por último, al ser encuestados sobre lo que desde su perspectiva debe hacer un aprendiz del inglés para ser competente en el idioma, ellos resaltaron lo siguiente:

¿Qué crees que debe hacer un aprendiz del inglés para ser competente en el idioma?



Se observa que los participantes reconocen que mostrarse constantes y tener una actitud proactiva en la búsqueda de oportunidades para practicar la lengua, así como comprometerse con su aprendizaje, son esenciales para alcanzar la competencia en el inglés.

### Entrevista

Los participantes consideran que, como hablantes de una segunda lengua, los errores que más comúnmente se presentan son aquellos que tienen que ver con el vocabulario y la gramática. Puntualmente, el desconocimiento de algún término en un contexto determinado, además de los falsos cognados, mismos que, según Adriana le "traicionan a la hora de hablar y escribir". Otra razón es el registro del vocabulario que cambia de un contexto a otro. Los alumnos mencionaron que el registro formal les requiere de conocer mucho vocabulario.

Por otro lado, la gramática, la cual falla más comúnmente, según los participantes, al momento de hablar. Dicen los entrevistados, que antes de emitir alguna opinión o idea, pareciera todo sonar perfectamente en sus mentes, sin embargo cuando lo verbalizan, hay errores gramaticales

El hecho de que se percaten de que han cometido un error en la lengua meta, tiene un impacto no favorable en ellos, ya que el haber incurrido en una falla gramatical, les provoca ponerse nerviosos, y consecuentemente, cometen más errores. algunos comentaron que hacen una pausa para organizar sus ideas y después poder continuar. En contraste, otros alegaron que hacer una pausa es algo que definitivamente no harían porque eso los pondría, aún más, en evidencia con la persona que están hablando, o quien los esté escuchando.

Por último, discutieron sobre los factores que, desde su perspectiva, causan el error. Uno de ellos es el hecho de la cantidad tan vasta de información que manejan al tratarse de dos idiomas, cada uno con su vocabulario y reglas muy particulares. Al respecto, los participantes afirman que, tratándose de gramática, la memorización, estrategia a la que algunos recurren, y mientras que pareciera que comprenden una regla cuando se les presenta en el aula, se torna completamente distinto al momento de ponerla en práctica en un contexto realista. Al respecto, uno de ellos dijo que "los nervios son traicioneros".



Además de ello, Zell dijo que al hablar en su lengua materna habla "rápido", y al intentar hacer lo mismo en inglés, algo falla. La razón que menciona es que en español la gramática es más maleable, en el sentido de que el orden de palabras puede variar, situación que no se da en el inglés, idioma en el que el orden es específico, y de no respetarse, termina siendo incorrecto.

Aunado a ello, durante la discusión, un participante mencionó el examen estandarizado como una causa del error. Explicó que, en tal examen, siempre se esperan respuestas específicas, y eso a los estudiantes les cause un sentimiento de perfeccionismo. No obstante, ese perfeccionismo, desemboca en una sobre exigencia de utilizar la palabra correcta en todo momento, incluso de concentrarse más en los errores que en los aciertos. "Por ejemplo, si en un writing tengo noventa y ocho palabras correctas y dos mal, me obsesiono con esas dos palabras y no me dijo que tuve noventa y ocho bien", alegó Onliner. A partir de los datos obtenidos en esta investigación se logra comprender la perspectiva de la población encuestada en cuanto a los factores que conducen a cometer un error o falla gramatical o de vocabulario en la lengua inglesa. La información que se obtuvo de ambas herramientas permite observar no sólo la perspectiva sobre la importancia -o carencia de ella- de las macro y micro habilidades de la lengua, sino algunas cuestiones de preferencias o intereses del mismo PE Lengua Inglesa, el hecho de que los alumnos se percaten o no de sus errores al hacer uso del inglés, y también sobre cómo es que ellos resuelven tal situación.

De la población encuestada y entrevistada, el 100% parece percatarse de cuando cometen errores, lo que varía es la manera en que ellos reaccionan. Algunos de ellos, al percatarse del error, optan por simplemente seguir su tarea sin estancarse en el porqué de ese error. Mientras que otros, sí pausan e intentan corregirlo.

Lo que sí es una constante es el sentimiento de inseguridad y pena que les causa el corregir un error. Algo que llamó mi atención fue cuando mencionaron el impacto que tiene el examen estandarizado en ellos. Tal examen se aplica para que haya uniformidad en los temas evaluados y en que todos los alumnos de determinado nivel cuenten con las mismas oportunidades de aprobarlo. Curiosamente, Onliner comentó lo siguiente:

*"...tiene que ver con la carrera o por el cómo nos formaron. Por ejemplo, los exámenes estandarizados... ahí les importa que debes poner la palabra que los creadores quieren. Entonces nos hicieron como que muy perfeccionistas en ese sentido."*

Lo que es interesante al respecto del extracto anterior es que el objetivo del examen estandarizado que ellos presentan, por parte de los evaluadores significa el crear una oportunidad igualitaria para el alumnado. Sin embargo, para algunos alumnos, como Onliner, representa un factor que genera cierta inseguridad al reducir las opciones de respuesta a únicamente las que se incluyen en el libro de texto.

Las evaluaciones parecen igualmente ser un elemento que resalta lo que está mal en su uso del idioma, más que lo que está bien. En palabras de Mar:

“crea demasiada inseguridad el hecho de tener un error”

Finalmente, en contraste con el extracto anterior, comentó The Chosen One:

*"no te puedes casar con los errores... al final te das cuenta que estás aprendiendo algo que en la vida habías ocupado, entonces fracasa tanto como puedas y ya después retoma nuevamente esa parte de la lengua inglesa"*

## **Conclusiones**

Se puede concluir que, la totalidad de alumnos, ya sea por sí mismos o porque su maestro de inglés en turno se los hace notar, saben cuando cometen un error en inglés. Además, el sentimiento de pena o inseguridad al cometer una falla en la lengua meta parece ser una constante en la población estudiada. Algunas de las respuestas arrojan datos inesperados. Por ejemplo, el hecho de que un examen estandarizado (llevado a cabo de tal manera con la finalidad de que haya igualdad de oportunidades entre el alumnado para acreditar las experiencias educativas de inglés) pueda generar inseguridad en ellos, en su búsqueda de la -casi- perfección en la lengua inglesa. O que los mismos alumnos

opinan que se debería tener una actitud positiva en torno al error, por ende, no consideran que el cometer errores en una lengua que se está aprendiendo sea algo que puede mermar el proceso mismo de aprendizaje, sino que, por otro lado, puede dar luz sobre lo que se debe trabajar para ser un hablante competente del inglés como L2.

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## CAPÍTULO 2

Beliefs and Attitudes Regarding Teaching Talian as a Heritage Language:  
A Socio-linguistic Analysis of Teaching Material Talian Par Cei e  
Grandi Gramàtica e Stòria

Mauri da Cruz de Morais  
maurimorais30@gmail.com  
Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste  
Loremi Loregian-Penkak  
llpenkal@unicentro.br  
Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste

### Introduction

According to the Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN), in 2014, among the first languages recognized as Brazilian Cultural Reference by IPHAN and the Ministry of Culture, MinC, Talian stands out. It was the first language of immigration to receive such recognition, opening the way for others. Talian, along with two more indigenous languages, Asurini do Trocará and Guarani Mbya, “were inventoried in 2010 by the IPHAN pilot project, carried out between 2008 and 2011” (Raso et al., 2011, p. 39)<sup>1</sup>. As of November 19, 2014, they became part of the National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity (INDL), according to Decree 7387/2010.

Benveniste (1989, as cited in Preti, 2004) states that language is “an element of interaction between the individual and the society in which he acts. It is through it that reality is transformed into signs, through the association of sound signifiers to arbitrary meanings with which communication takes place”<sup>2</sup> (p. 28). When considering the interdependence between society and language, one tends to see language as the way in which each linguistic community

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<sup>1</sup> “foram inventariadas em 2010 pelo projeto-piloto do IPHAN, executado entre os anos de 2008 e 2011” (Raso et al., 2011, p. 39);

<sup>2</sup> “um elemento de interação entre o indivíduo e a sociedade em que ele atua. É através dela que a realidade se transforma em signos, pela associação de significantes sonoros a significados arbitrários com os quais se processa a comunicação”.

structures its thinking and how these structures linguistically articulate their reality. Thus, the existence of a diversity agreed by various factors of a nature external to the language, together with internal conditionings, is admitted.

The southern region of Brazil has vast linguistic and cultural diversity. Several factors contribute to this, among which the following stand out: a) it is a border region with Spanish-speaking countries; b) it was originally disputed land between the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and the Portuguese definitively took possession of it from the 17th and 18th centuries; and c) large waves of European immigrants, mainly Italians and Germans, speaking languages other than Portuguese, were established in the region from the 19th century onwards.

Among the European ethnic-linguistic groups in contact with Portuguese, Italian occupies a prominent position. Ianni (1979) states that in the 19th and 20th centuries Brazil received more than five million immigrants, of which one and a half million were Italians.

An important concept to be clarified in order to understand the proposal of the thesis in progress is the definition of "heritage language". The concept presented by Ortale (2016) is that "language of inheritance is the language with which a person has cultural identification and a feeling of belonging to a particular community that uses it, either through ancestral ties or by living in the same socio-cultural environment with speakers of that language" (p. 27).

The concept above refers to the feeling of belonging, to the complexity of being and living with more than one language, appropriating a culture, meaning new memories and emotions. We also add, in some cases, a political act and linguistic resistance. A relevant point in consideration of the previous definition is that the teaching of the heritage language foresees students with or without Italian ancestry. The ancestry factor may be linked to many students in Brazil, but it is not the only one. In fact, the present didactic material indicated for this work considers not only ancestry but also the environment in which Talian is spoken, that is, Brazilian lands.

For Balthazar and Perin Santos (2020), considering the historical and social formation of this language, it is natural that descendants of Italians are interested in this language, and that is why it is common, for example, to find people in Italian-Brazilian communities who learned Talian even before learning Brazilian Portuguese. It is also common to find those who speak

it, especially with family members, without any difficulty. In these cases, didactic material can be used as a proposal to maintain this language, and as a proposal to debate linguistic aspects of Talian linked to the identity of the speakers, such as pride, shame, variations, and linguistic prejudice.

A relevant implication in understanding Talian as a heritage language in Brazil concerns Brazilian researchers' responsibility for production, work and teaching, a view in which teachers and linguists are included. Therefore, Talian may not be a foreign language, but its dissemination must be as important as if it were one. This position is in line with the perspective of producing specific teaching materials for specific audiences, as this allows the adaptation of teaching proposals to the needs of students, and the socio-cultural reality in which they circulate. Still on Balthazar and Perin Santos (2020), the materials used in the teaching of foreign languages are made to serve different audiences, and without adequate approximation to the students' experiences, they are teaching tools with low interlocution and consequently little relevance.

In this perspective, we intend to make an analysis based on the idea that lexical import is a phenomenon that is consolidated over time, so we propose a synchronic and diachronic analysis by the lexical import of the word. Language is a social fact and therefore there are no borders that prevent it from encountering other territories. It is important to remember that it is not the language that occupies a space in itself, but its speakers. These are the ones who come into contact with other speakers, other cultures, other languages, and it is through this contact that languages, in many cases, become increasingly heterogeneous. Assuming that, according to our experience at Cucagna Scuola de Talian (Language Center – UNICENTRO), there are several beliefs and, consequently, attitudes that permeate the teaching/learning process of this language.

The research questions that will guide this work are: a) Are the beliefs and linguistic attitudes of Talian 1 and 2 students concerning the language manifested in the same proportions? Why? b) Do the linguistic beliefs and attitudes of Cucagna students and students of the CEVEP research group, not participating in this project, manifest themselves in the same proportions? Why? c) Which of the three selected groups (Talian 1, Talian 2 and CEVEP) have more positive, more negative and more neutral beliefs and attitudes

towards the Talian language varieties? What factors could justify these results?

It is important to conduct research on this subject provided there is a lack of studies concerning minority languages. We were able to confirm such a claim by accessing the CAPES website, which is composed of theses and dissertations, in search of the following keywords: Teaching Talian as a Heritage Language, Talian par Cei and Grandi Grammar and History, Talian: beliefs and attitudes. These descriptors were applied both to the search for dissertations and theses (January, 2022), and this is how we proved the originality of the proposed research, since there was no true similarity found.

It is also important to conduct this type of studies in order to look into the beliefs and attitudes that permeate the teaching of Talian. In the present study, this will be especially done by analyzing sociolinguistic and methodological aspects for the structure of *Talian grammar par Cei and Grandi Gramàtica e Stòria* as didactic material for the teaching of this language as a heritage language in Brazil.

## Literature Review

The theoretical framework that underlies this research brings together studies aimed at linguistic beliefs and attitudes in the teaching of the immigration language, Talian, considering that the corpus under analysis consists of surveys to be carried out in classes of Talian 1 and 2, from the Center of Languages of the State University of the Midwest, UNICENTRO. Paraná is characterized as a border region and for having been colonized mainly by descendants of immigrants from different ethnic origins, of which we highlight the Italian one. In the region, the phenomenon of linguistic contact is observed, in which the culture of the other is perceptible in the relationship between peers.

The study is also guided, although this is not the main focus, by the contributions of Weinreich et al. (2006), Labov (2008) and the authors that follow them, to collect clues regarding the phenomenon of linguistic heterogeneity, since the communities under study have characteristics that show the coexistence of speakers of different languages and cultures. As the proposal suggests the use of grammar as a teaching material, we suggest a debate in this thesis about this teaching instrument that for a long time has



generated discussions presenting both pros and cons, and which evidently presents itself as the oldest science of the language studies. To trace the historical course of this element, we are guided by studies by Lima (2006), Bagno (1999) and Antunes (2007).

Calvet (2002) affirms that "[...] languages do not exist without the people who speak them, and the history of a language is the history of its speakers" (p. 12), repeating Coseriu's postulate (1987) that words do not "travel" by themselves, but are introduced into the collection of an individual through the speech of another individual, through contacts. This clearly shows that there is no way to detach the language from its speakers and its social context. Historically, in fact, this is a basic assumption of sociolinguistic studies.

This premise is taken, then, as a reference for the present study, which aims to investigate the beliefs and attitudes of Talian students towards their own speech and those of others, considering that these speakers have their life stories, their customs, their ways of feeling and attributing value, and, for this reason, they can reveal a lot of what they think, how they behave and how they evaluate speakers.

It is a fact that, in all communities, there are ways, norms of speaking certain languages considered better, either because they are spoken by a prestigious social class, or because the media promotes this notion of more "correct" speaking, while other varieties are discredited. However, according to Calvet (2002),

[...] what interests sociolinguistics is the social behavior that this norm can provoke. In fact, it can develop two types of consequences on linguistic behaviors: some refer to the way speakers view their own language, others refer to the reactions of speakers when speaking of others. In one case, its linguistic practice will be valued, or it will be tried, instead, to modify it to conform it to a prestigious model; in the other, people will be judged according to their way of speaking. (p. 69)

In the work of Weinreich et al. (2006), there are elucidations on the implications of language dissociated from psychological or sociological factors, that is, it is in social relationships that speech behavior must be understood, therefore, in this context, there is no understanding that encompasses the full complexity of the heterogeneity of speech and human behavior.

According to Görski and Coelho (2009), Stylistics is a linguistic resource related to the style of the language used, both oral and written; it is the study of language variation to assign emotional and aesthetic meanings to words and phrases. Stylistics works with the context in which the words are inserted to identify the different meanings. Choosing one synonym over another, words that carry meanings that are not originally defined for it, Stylistics explains all these issues of language. The focus of study is not just the words, but the way they are organized, not in the same way that Syntax studies them, but how they are pronounced and in what geographical position they are, how they are organized in relation to the text and the type of writing used.

The uniformity of norms shared by the group occurs when the linguistic variable has social marks evident to the speakers. This means that they must be aware of these uses and be able to make value judgments about variable linguistic forms. Normally, the prestige group, whose speech is dominant at school, at work, in the media, etc., are assigned positive values (e.g., speech is 'beautiful', 'correct' etc.); to the socially discredited group, on the other hand, negative values are usually linked (e.g., speech is 'ugly', 'wrong' etc.).

The human being is a guesser by nature and when individuals come into contact with other varieties and identify the differences between the speeches, “they are capable of emitting appreciations about the speech of the other, through positive or negative attitudes in relation to the language and the speaking of the other” (Lourenço, 2014, p. 1). Also, according to the author, this branch of sociolinguistics, that of beliefs and attitudes, “has sought to understand the phenomenon of variation based on the awareness that the language user has in face of their language or variant” (Lourenço, 2014, p. 1). Regarding the diversity of a language, what types of variations can occur in the same language? What are the consequences of this diversity?

Language is not just a communication tool. Calvet (2002) points out that language cannot be reduced to a simple tool, such as a hammer that we use when we need it and then keep it, “we do not take the language instrument out of its case when we need to communicate, to return it to the case later, as we take a hammer when we need to drive a nail” (p. 57). Consequently, speakers have certain feelings, beliefs and attitudes towards their own languages as well as those of others. We create images and stereotypes about a speaker from the moment we hear his voice and the way he pronounces words.

According to Carvalho (1989),

Each language, as an element of social or inter-individual communication, has its lexicon that, through associations or associative fields, materializes a peculiar way of seeing the world. This lexicon is made up of words that are not isolated signs, but elements within a system and, as such, subject to a scale of values. Starting from the study of the lexicon, one can explain the life of a society. (pp. 25-26)

Considering that the subjects categorize language in scales of values and, therefore, through it we can explain the life of a society, it is correct to think that there are certain groups that recognize themselves through the language they use and that have beliefs about the language they speak and, consequently, reflect these beliefs in their attitudes.

Botassini (2013) points out that defining the term “beliefs” is more difficult than defining the term “attitudes” due to the amount of published works on the subject, which have dedicated little to the first term. The author states that, in these works, the terms appear “closely intertwined”, thus, it becomes difficult to deal with one without referring to the other.

According to Botassini (2013), the first work on linguistic beliefs and attitudes in Brazil was a dissertation defended in 1976 at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, authored by Andrietta Lenard and supervised by Prof. Dr. Paulino Vandresen. Entitled “Linguistic Loyalty in Rodeo (SC)”, the research aimed to understand which reasons, linguistic and historical, led Italian immigrants from that city to develop resistance to linguistic integration. What draws our attention in all this is the fact that, according to Botassini (2013), it was only at the end of the 1990s that scholars became interested and developed research on the theme proposed here, involving linguistic beliefs.

According to the authors, when the term beliefs is linked to applied linguistics, the studies seek to question “what cultural aspects can be learned in a social unit as unique as the school” (Freudenberger & Rottava, 2002, p. 88). Another question is if there is a uniformity in the acquisition process of these aspects or if they are learned differently by people who are part of the same group.

The authors state that to better understand the teaching/learning process, it is necessary to study the beliefs that teachers have about the process,

analyzing three main points: what the teacher thinks, speaks and does. In this way, beliefs have "an affective, a cognitive and a behavioral component, and they influence [...] what teachers know, feel, do and how they interpret their doing" (Freudenberger & Rottava,, 2002, p. 85). The authors also point out that there are several factors that can influence teachers' beliefs: the classroom, individual factors, age, sex, social and cultural class, competence, and marital status, and emphasize that these factors can be different for each teacher precisely because of the unstable character of the belief system.

Regarding the attitude that can be taken when carrying out research on teaching and/or learning, whether teachers or learners, the authors, citing Barcelos (2011), point to three different approaches: normative, metacognitive and contextual. In the first, comparative studies aim to detect the beliefs that students or teachers have and those that the ideal student or teacher should have. The metacognitive approach recognizes other influencing factors that contribute to the formation of beliefs. It takes into account the goals of the people involved in the researched context, but still seeks to compare them to an ideal teacher or student.

In the contextual approach, the main objective is to understand the teaching/learning process as it is and is not concerned with comparing it with an ideal student or teacher, considering beliefs part of a culture, which is part of a specific context of a society or group. The most recurrent factors in these studies are "the influence of previous experience as a language learner and the role of students' beliefs in teachers' beliefs (or vice versa)" (Freudenberger & Rottava, 2002, pp. 93-94). The authors conclude that studies carried out on beliefs in the teaching/learning process contribute to the solution of problems and to make this process more successful.

For Lourenço (2014), the branch of linguistic beliefs and attitudes "has sought to understand the phenomenon of variation based on the awareness that the language user has of his language or its variant" (p. 01) and of the language of other speakers. Therefore, it is necessary to approach teaching methods. If we analyze the space reserved for grammar in language courses, it is possible to see that it is getting smaller, although it is present in the lessons and serves as a basis for learning progression. This issue will be addressed more in detail in a subsequent section.

## Brief history of Italian immigration in Brazil

According to the document Linguistic Diversity of Rio Grande do Sul (Diversidade Linguística do Rio Grande do Sul, 2020, "Talian was inventoried by Decree No. 7387 of December 9, 2010 (which establishes the Inventory of Linguistic Diversity) and received in 2014 the Certificate of Cultural Reference Brazilian" (p. 13). However, in addition to RS, Talian is also spoken in many other states, with more emphasis on the southern region of the country. It is estimated that:

About 64.62%, based on the trends indicated in the census of IBGE 1940. In RS, there are several municipalities that already have legislation defining Talian as a co-official language, among them: Serafina Corrêa (Law Municipal nº 2615, of November 13, 2009), Flores da Cunha (Law Municipal 3180, of April 27, 2015), Pará (Law No. 3122, of August 25, 2015), Nova Roma do Sul (Municipal Law nº 1310, of October 16, 2015), Fagundes Varela (Municipal Law No. 1922, of June 10, 2016), Antônio Prado (Municipal Law 3017, of September 28, 2016), Ivorá (Law 1307, of March 23, 2018) and Caxias do Sul (second language – Municipal Law No. 8208, of October 9, 2017). It is important to mention that there is a significant production of literature, dictionaries, grammars and songs in Talian, as well as a strong broadcast via radio programs (50 programs inventoried between RS, SC, PR, MG and ES, contained in the Report End of Pilot Project "Talian Inventory", p. 10 and 11, 2010). According to Talian Diffusers Association (ASSODITA), today, 2018, about 250 radio programs in RS and Brazil. (p.13)

The historiography of Brazil, according to Raso et al. (2011), points that the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century brought new conditionings, causing linguistic changes in the south of the country, when a strong crisis affected the most Europe's poor. European immigration in this period is due to the expansion of capitalism in the old continent (Industrial Revolution) and political, economic and social transformations in America, period characterized by free (non-slave) work by foreigners and their descendants, as well as their languages, which were still trying to fit in with the government agencies, who could be seen everywhere. In the South, the process of industrialization was booming, and for this reason people from different parts of the world were brought to carry out the work; thus the creation of the tertiary sector began more intensely. In this way, the formation of ethnic groups

marked a consolidation of territorial limits.

For Ianni (1979, as cited in Margotti, 2004), the search for workers foreign countries was due to the abolition of slavery on Brazilian soil, which aimed to extinguish the presence of the black worker and "whitening the country". German immigrants were brought, Italians, Poles, Spaniards and Portuguese, adding to the economy the capacity of the artisanal work and the mastery of techniques that could be useful to the economy. Italy was still going through an economic crisis and the rise, caused by the imbalance generated by the unification of the country, led to problems with "its very dense population and relatively limited aspects of its still predominantly agricultural economy and backward in its set" (Candeloro, as cited in Franzina, 2006, p. 87).

According to Meneghel (2015),

until the second half of the 19th century, the Italian Peninsula was divided into several kingdoms, which were independent states. Some of these kingdoms were, including, ruled in an authoritarian way by royal families of Austria and France. The northern region of the Italian Peninsula - especially the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia - was much more developed than the center and south. (p. 33).

Furthermore, unification was of interest to the nobility and, mainly, to the industrial bourgeoisie, as this would increase the consumer market, in addition to facilitating the trade, with the unification of standards, taxes, currency and others.

The workday of foreign peoples began convincingly, and many believed that they would be lucky enough to start over in another country; however, it was not what happened. The partnership established between the countries consisted of the employee contracting debts he couldn't get rid of. Upon arrival, "he was put to work alongside slaves and ended up receiving the same treatment as the captive" (De Boni & Costa, 1984, p. 29). What can be seen is that slavery only changed peoples, "[...] Prussia (1859) and the German state (1871) began to make emigration to Brazil difficult, through restrictive measures like the von der Heydsche Rescript" (Margotti, 2004, pp. 31-32). In virtue of these restrictions, the search for Italian immigrant workers intensified, as they did not have this restriction and were going through difficult times,

especially the rural community. Families received land to plant; however, they had to return a third of what was harvested from their respective owners, and, even then, what they harvested was not always enough for families.

According to Medeiros (1997), from 1860 onwards, as a result of political leaderships from the Movement for the Unification of Italy, who had not kept their promises to population, changed the entire original political project, and imposed the collection of abusive taxes, generated a mass of excluded people, who saw in emigration a new chance. Approximately 62% of immigrants who entered Brazil in the 1880s were Italians. However, the most important stage of Italian immigration was at the beginning of the republic, in direct connection with coffee expansion and immigration policy, subsidized at a time when preference was given to the entry of families instead of isolated individuals.

From the northern region of the Peninsula (Veneto) came small landowners, sharecroppers and tenants, with extended families of up to fifteen people. Until the mid-1880s, the emigrants who left the South of the Peninsula (Calabria) had the same conditions previously portrayed. It is only at the end of the 20th century that Brazilian immigration agents in Europe, linked to the coffee barons, recruited immigrants, manual workers, totally destitute of capital, who came mainly from southern Italy.

It is also worth noting the number of immigrants who arrived in the great cities. They had an active participation in the Brazilian industrialization process, representing, in the year of 1901, 90% of the workers employed in the industries of São Paulo. Due to these workers, who were Italian immigrants, this group participated in the formation of the Brazilian labor movement and the dissemination of the anarchist movement in Brazil.

Although the situations in which they lived were not so favorable, some Italians did not feel free to leave their country; moreover, they did not want to run the risks of transoceanic emigration. There was in these peoples the idea of a possible reversal. However, the fascination exercised by the myth of America as a "promised land" had more force, and millions of men and women, from different provinces and regions, fleeing misery and hunger, abandoned their houses. Around 1870, the movement of mass departure from Italy to America began, mainly to the United States, Argentina and Brazil, a movement that

lasted until the beginning of the 20th century (Franzina, 2006).

Grammar in Teaching Methods: contribution of the communicative approach

Grammar has been highly valued over time, as it has been highly judged, and is now regaining its prominent place in language teaching. But how to place it today in the teaching and learning of heritage languages? What is its place and how is it treated by teachers and students? Is it important for language learning and to what extent?

According to Balthazar and Perin Santos (2020), "in order to understand the underlying approaches to teaching materials and teaching methods, we need to return to some constructs that provided an epistemological basis for the communicative approach" (p. 863). In the affirmative, we consider as the theoretical basis for the communicative approach important directions presented in the 1970s of the 20th century, influenced by studies in the area of sociolinguistics. The linguist Dell Hymes was one of the great exponents of communicative studies. The central concepts of this approach are from this author: the cultural and social aspects of language. According to Hymes (1972), for a speaker to be understood as competent, he could not only master the grammatical structures of a language, but he would have to understand how to use it in social contexts. This contributed to a shift in focus in linguistics research, moving away from studies that prioritized the mastery of grammatical structures.

Currently, language teaching and learning has significantly presented communicative constructs, whether in different approaches, methodologies, teaching practices, teacher training and the development of teaching materials. Over the last decades, several authors have contributed and expanded this perspective of studies, presenting new strands and theoretical constructs based on the Communicative Approach (CA) vision. Under the CA justification, taking into account the internal mechanisms of the language and the individual issues of language productions, the language is no longer seen as something external learned by the speaker.

If we analyze the space reserved for grammar in language courses, it is possible to see that it is getting smaller, although it is present in the lessons and



serves as a basis for learning progression. For Vitullo (2011), grammar has a diffuse role, given that in CA the rules of the language are established, that is, part of communication, so the language is not something external to be learned, it must remain in the background. Even with the judgments regarding the use of grammar, it remains indispensable.

Talian is following a path of diffusion and safeguarding, showing itself to be more alive every day. Therefore, undertake a reflection on factors that contribute to the constitution of identity (and subjectivity) in learning as a heritage language. Thus, we raise some linguistic and extralinguistic questions that are linked to the teaching of Talian in Brazil, in order to understand the reasons that motivate the student to identify with a majority-based Venetian culture and want to continue this language.

## **Methodology**

This work is based on the theoretical and methodological principles that govern research in Variationist Sociolinguistics and studies on Linguistic Beliefs and Attitudes. Moreno Fernández (2009) points out some techniques necessary for research on beliefs and attitudes to be able to analyze "unobservable" behaviors, namely: direct methods and indirect methods. According to the author, the direct method is applied through interviews and questionnaires that can be composed of open questions - which the informant can answer as he sees fit - and closed questions - in which the informant chooses an answer from among those offered to you.

According to the author, interviews and open-ended questionnaires present questions such as: "What do you think about...? or How would you react...?. What do you think about the way the person who has just heard the recording speaks? (In some studies, voices are frequently used in recordings or stimulus tracks)" (Moreno Fernández, 2009, p. 185). Indirect measurements, on the other hand, "apply without the speaker being aware of the purpose of the investigation" (Moreno Fernández, 2009, p. 185).

In the present research, two types of methods are used: direct and indirect. A priori, the linguistic structure of the Talian grammar by Cei and Grandi will be analyzed in order to understand the gaps left for those who use them as a teaching tool, such as the morphological and syntactic structure:

verb tenses and their structures, supporting texts, activities, the construction of the alphabet and numerals, in addition to the cultural heritage. In addition, forms will be developed to interview students from Cucagna-Scola de Talian (descendants and not descendants of Italians) regarding the beliefs that concern the learning of an immigration language and the use of didactic material that meets the needs of this audience. This, in order to verify if the students participating in this project have any differences in linguistic beliefs and attitudes towards this language.

Sociolinguistics proposes some steps to be followed for the analysis of groups of factors, aiming at facilitating the work of data quantification, such as the consideration of the phonological context, morphological class, position of the variable and the morphological status of the word that contains the variable (Tarallo, 1994). In order to comply with the quantitative character characteristic of sociolinguistic research, it will be necessary to collect a significant number of data, which will be statistically analyzed, a posteriori, related to the conditioning social factors, such as age group, education, sex and socioeconomic level.

### **Preliminary Results and Discussion**

The preliminary results of this work are that students are likely to make more positive evaluations for the communicative approach. This may be due to the use of materials (textbook, grammar, songs, etc.) produced by scholars of this language, present in most classrooms of the groups of informants in this research. For the theoretical reference, we have reviewed studies focused on the approach of beliefs and attitudes and linguistic studies that support the thesis to be defended. All this leads to affirm that communicative approach and grammar go hand in hand. It is also worth highlighting the large number of organizations promoting Talian and safeguarding the vast demand from students for teaching this language, and the unprecedented achievement by Unicentro to be the first university to offer a course for teaching an immigration language.

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## CAPÍTULO 3

Case study of the compulsory ELT Programme at the Autonomous  
University of Coahuila campus Torreón

Rosa Cecilia Quintana Saldaña  
roquintanas@uadec.edu.mx

Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila  
Marisol Fernández Zetina  
marisolfernandezzetina@uadec.edu.mx  
Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila

### **Introduction**

The ELT situation in Mexico is worrying, as many studies show the lack of proficiency students get at the end of their English Programme. According to Davies (2020), "most ELT in Mexico, perhaps over 85%, fails to produce much, or any, substantial learning of English" (p.9). This has become a focus of different research, trying to define the reasons for this issue. According to López et al. (2015), "the profile with which students enter to public universities is characterized by great limitations in the use of foreign languages" (p.4). As evidence of this, a study conducted by Gonzalez, Vivaldo and Castillo in 2004 in a University of Metropolitan Zone in Mexico City, consisted in applying an international standard exam which measures 400 hours of English instruction to students who received English classes during their elementary, secondary and high school level. The results revealed that "only 10.6 % of students passed the linguistic evaluation, 23.9% of the students passed the basic part, 8.6% students passed the intermediate and 6.5% passed the advanced. In general, 75.6% did not attain any level" (López et al., 2015, p.5).

The main focus of this dissertation project is on the ELT Programme of the Autonomous University of Coahuila campus Torreón. The University was founded in 1957, achieving its autonomous status in 1973. It brings services to sixty-seven academic units distributed throughout the state of Coahuila on

three main campuses: Saltillo, Torreon and North. In total, 14 High schools, 45 schools and faculties, 8 research centers and 3 hospitals comprise the University.

It was not until 2008 that the English Department was created, in order to include English as a compulsory subject in undergraduate programmes at all the schools and faculties of all the State. It has been 13 years to date, where the ELT Programme has been changing as a new administration arrives; as a consequence, misunderstandings are like to arise to mention some: confusion in procedures for a certain purpose, ignorance of the level of English required for graduating the Programme, confusion about the curriculum to follow, resistance to administrative changes related to the programme in general. All of the areas mentioned are covered within the different questionnaires and focus groups with academic managers, teaching staff and students, as these are key stakeholders in the English Programme.

Regarding the creation of the ELT Programme of the English Department, an external company designed the model to be followed and it stated that in order for learners to achieve the requirements for each level, the student had to take 5 hours in face-to-face classes with a teacher, and 2 hours in a Self-Access Center, where students could work with extra materials and the Department would have resources to generate those materials, but this final part was not in the plans of UAdeC. In total, 7 hours a week were necessary to get the knowledge that would take students from A1 level to B1 level in 5 levels (semesters) of their careers. At the beginning of the Programme, there was an English requirement when students finish the 5th level course, that was first established as mandatory, though later, due to political issues, this requirement was canceled. Nowadays, there is an internal document that approves this Requirement from the generation which started their undergraduate programmes in August-December 2013 and subsequently, until the present day. The current English requirement is 450 points on the TOEFL scale, but the Department defined the level according to the National standards of the Language "Certificación Nacional de Nivel de Idioma" (CENNI by its acronym in Spanish) [National Certification of Language Level] being this level B1-, which is the scale used in Mexico to measure the level of English. Students cannot get their degree unless they pass this English Requirement.

Through this research project we will collect data from key

participants: students, academic staff and academic managers of the variety of schools and faculties that conform the Autonomous University of Coahuila campus Torreón.

There are different aspects in which the ELT Programme will be evaluated and described. The areas that will be covered in the explanation are related with teachers' profiles, language curriculum and the updates it has suffered, the scope of each of the faculties according to their availability of hours dedicated to English. Furthermore, the methodology needs to be specified; also, the resources that are available to the English programme, materials, contents, pedagogical trends, as well as clearly stated communication channels within the English Department.

We believe from our readings of experiences in similar institutions, like the Autonomous University of Guadalajara or the National Autonomous University of Mexico, that having a clear ELT Programme could enhance the aspects listed above. In order to find out whether this belief is shared, we will collect data from different participant groups: academic managers, academic staff and students. This data will hopefully enable us to: (a) draw conclusions regarding how the different stakeholders perceive the ELT Programme in the University and (b) to make recommendations for change and re-organization of the programme.

This study aims to critically analyze existing theories and literature related with the development, and implementation of ELT Programmes in Mexico. Also, it aims to identify potential areas of opportunity, as well as standards of teaching a foreign language, more specifically English, in higher education, administrative procedures and teaching practices. This research will propose an analysis of the current ELT Programme within a public University and it will identify areas of improvement. It could be a model for similar higher education institutions, here in Mexico and similar contexts outside the country.

In the context of higher education, specifically in the Autonomous University of Coahuila, the objectives of this research are:

- Explore how the compulsory English Language programme is being implemented in the University and how it is perceived by three key stakeholder groups.



- Identify some areas where changes/improvements can be made.
- Formulate some recommendations about how these changes can be implemented.

The study will focus on these three questions:

1. How is the Autonomous University of Coahuila, campus Torreón implementing an Institution wide English Language Programme which is compulsory for all students?
2. How is the English Language programme perceived by the key stakeholders: academic managers, academic staff (teachers) and students?
3. What are the priorities for change or re-organization identified as a result?

By conducting this research project, we intend to analyse the current situation of the ELT Programme. When we present the results, we consider the English Department will have a better understanding of how it is perceived by academic managers, academic staff and students. As a result, areas of improvement will be identified as well as recommendations for change. This is an opportunity to present concrete evidence on how the English Programme is working and how it can improve based on the perceptions of the key stakeholders.

The English Department of the Autonomous University of Coahuila campus Torreón will benefit most from the findings of this research project; as it will have a clear analysis and some recommendations in order to improve the areas of opportunity described. As a consequence, it will acquire a better reputation and understanding from the University community.

## Review of literature

### *ELT Programmes in higher education*

In Mexico, there are thirty two Public Autonomous Universities, each representing one state of the country. According to the H. Cámara de Diputados (2003), the Federal Law of Parastatal Entities establishes in its third article that "Universities and other higher education institutions which the law grants autonomy, will be governed by their specific laws... if the university will be governed by its specific law, this must contain the organic structure of the same". Autonomous universities in the country can decide about their Academic programmes and when to include or modify the current subjects they have in their curricula. This also includes ELT Programmes. However, this freedom is in a way controlled by a National Association called Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior (ANUIES by its acronym in Spanish) [National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutes] which regulates plans, academic curricula and national policies of public and private higher education institutions. As Bonelli (2019) explains, "in terms of higher education governance, states are responsible for implementing higher education policies and for curricular developments, while SEP designs national level policy and provides funding to public higher education institutions" (p.4). Each of the Autonomous Universities are in charge of creating their ELT Programmes; nevertheless, there is a clear disorganization and lack of official and standardized documents regarding this topic. There is also a need to inform all the participants involved about the requirements and guidelines for each of the policies established. As Toledo et al. (2018) suggest, "it is the responsibility of the educational institutions, generate strategies that support language teachers knowing about the educational politics and language policy governing language programmes in the country" (p.88).

### *Attitudes towards compulsory ELT Programmes*

This action of compulsory programmes might be seen under two different angles: positive, as students might become aware of the importance of learning a second language for their professional and personal lives. The second view is negative as an imposition or a requirement to fulfill in order to

get a degree.

The impact that compulsory programmes have on the students is quite diverse. A study made by Uzun (2017) in a Turkish University where students have to take certain levels of English as compulsory subject, revealed that "it does not appear to be resulting in an increased amount of negative emotions and students still enjoy learning English although they take the course because it is obligatory in their programme" (p.14).

On the other side, there is this view of imposition and as consequence barriers are likely to appear. A study made by Despaigne (2010) suggests that "the diffusion of English makes ESL learning mandatory if Mexicans want to aspire to a better social and economic life. This contextual "imposition" highly influences perceptions and attitudes Mexicans have towards the language" (p.55). We do not mean to generalize this attitude, but this might be one of the reasons for the deficiencies in the programmes described at the beginning of this chapter.

In Mexico, English has become a compulsory subject in higher education in either public or private institutions. According to Toledo et al. (2018),

National and International educational institutions have determined that this language is necessary for the purposes of international mobility and improvement of the quality of life for those who are trained in Mexican higher education institutions. English represents an elite and status language that is functional and provides a status to Universities to increase the educational level of the programmes. (p.90)

Despite the fact that students need to attain a certain level of English to graduate, a good point is that they might have access to different mobility and scholarship programmes that are available at higher education level.

In summary, key issues regarding higher education were identified. Those issues were related with teacher training, teacher working conditions, different methodologies adapted in the ELT Programmes, and attitudes regarding compulsory programmes. The ELT programmes, described at the beginning of this chapter, that were implemented in elementary levels, might set the bases of why the majority of students in public institutions in México arrive at higher education with a low level of English. ELT Programmes

focused on the needs and goals of students should be designed and planned to achieve the proposed objectives.

## **Methodology**

This study used a mixed approach: qualitative for academic staff and academic managers and quantitative for students. One of the main reasons to use both methods was because of the amount of people involved in each of the groups. As Cohen et al. (2011) suggest: "The larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire may be" (p. 322). Furthermore, the type of information needed from each of the groups was different according to the level of involvement in the ELT Programme of the University. Academic managers are seen as decision-makers, academic staff follow what the administration decides and sometimes they are involved in those decisions. The perception of students, as the final product of this process, is vital to suggest improvements that authorities will take into consideration.

Each of the approaches were selected according to the number of participants included in each of the groups. Different techniques were used in each of the approaches, as well as data analysis instruments. The perceptions from academic managers and staff were collected through an open-ended questionnaire in a focus group session. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the main benefits of conducting these types of questionnaires are that the participants can express their views freely, without attaching to pre-set categories. However, it can lead to unnecessary information or the participants could lose the point easily.

The main objective of conducting these focus group sessions was to obtain participants' views regarding the ELT Programme in the University and more specifically Campus Torreón. A structured, open-ended questionnaire was used in each of the sessions with academic managers and academic staff. As Patton (1990, as cited in Biggam, 2015) expresses, "qualitative interviewing, using semi-structured questions, makes use of open-ended questions to encourage meaningful responses" (p.146). In this case, we used structured questions as we wanted to focus on some specific aspects of the ELT

Programme. Those questions helped to gather crucial information about their perceptions.

For the quantitative approach, the application Microsoft Forms, which is part of Office 365, was used to generate a link where students could complete the 35 questions. The questionnaire included a variety of items such as likert scale, ranking, quantity and open-ended questions. This quantitative method was used due to the large amount of the sample size and was helpful to gather students' perceptions about key aspects of the ELT Programme Campus Torreón. All the answers gathered from students were stored in a Microsoft Forms account.

The qualitative approach allowed us to understand the perspectives participants had about the topic studied. As Silverman (2013) asserts, “qualitative methods are usually the most appropriate if you are more interested in how social phenomena arise in the interactions of the participants” (p.9). Participants were interacting in a neutral environment and they showed willingness to answer the questions and interact with each other.

### The participants

The participants were chosen according to how the different contexts are divided in Campus Torreón. This differentiation is an internal scale used in the English Department and is related with students' level of entrance. In the first semester of the careers, which is equal to the first level of English, an exam is applied to all the students with the purpose of knowing their English level. With these results, the English Department classified the schools and faculties in low, medium and high levels. Nowadays, there are 17 schools and faculties in Campus Torreón, 12 out of 17 are classified as low level, 3 as medium and 2 as high levels of entrance. Academic managers, academic staff and students were selected to represent those contexts.

### Data collection procedure

For the focus group sessions, the procedure was the following: First, we talked with the academic staff and managers to explain the main purpose of the dissertation project and ask them if they would like to be part of it. If their

answer was positive, we sent them via email the consent form to be filled in and returned it the same way. Then, according to participants' availability, we arranged the day and time of the focus group session that was held through Microsoft Teams. The sessions were video-recorded in order to analyze the information with detail. After that, transcripts of the interviews were generated for the purposes of analyzing and presenting the information. The data analysis was selected for the qualitative study and the findings were presented in the corresponding section.

For the students, this procedure was followed: Being a large sample of students, we asked the teachers to be the gatekeepers. We sent them an email in which we asked their help to send the link to the questionnaire. Teachers sent the link to their students. The data analysis for this quantitative approach was selected and the findings of this approach presented in the corresponding chapter.

### Data Analysis

In order to achieve the second and third research question of this study, the qualitative data was analyzed to describe and summarize participants' perceptions on the issues raised in the focus group sessions.

The qualitative information was presented by research questions. According to Cohen et al. (2011), "this is a very useful way of organizing data, as it draws together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern to the researcher, and preserves the coherence of the material" (p. 468). Due to the variety of the opinions, this strategy provided a wider perspective of the participants' perceptions of the ELT Programme. The issue we were aware of during the qualitative data analysis was to focus on participants' perceptions and not adding extra comments, or preconceived ideas. As Cohen et al. (2011) clearly state, the problem in this kind of analysis is with the researcher and "great caution and self-awareness" (p.469) must be presented during all the process.

The analysis of quantitative information was presented by descriptive statistics and was organized by research question. The main purpose was to describe the students' perceptions about the ELT Programme and the amount of students that know or do not know about certain aspects. As Cohen et al.

(2011) state, “such statistics make no inferences or predictions, they simply report what has been found, in a variety of ways” (p. 504). The analysis was carried out in percentages of the total sample, graphs were included as well as simply analysis of the information gathered. For items 6, 15, 31, 32, 33, and 34 of the questionnaire, which were open-questions, a summary of the responses was presented.

### Research Findings

The research findings are organized by research question and by stakeholders.

#### - Research question 1:

Since the beginning, the ELT Programme in the Autonomous University of Coahuila offers five compulsory levels of English taught in the first five semesters of students' careers. From 2018 to date, Communicative Language Teaching approach was established as a goal by the authorities of the University. This was a big change and it has required a lot of teacher training, changes in the methodology, and materials. The methodology used before was focused on grammar and vocabulary only; as a result, students struggle at communicative activities.

The majority of students entering the Autonomous University of Coahuila have low levels of English. This is measured by administering an entrance exam which shows that 66.7% of students got A1 level while only 3.2% of students got B1 level in the same exam (In the term August – December 2019).

#### - Research question 2:

At the beginnings of the ELT Programme in the University, there were many negative views, a lot of reluctance from the students to take the subject, even principals from the different faculties refused to include English as part of their curricula. Nowadays, the perceptions have changed, the situation has

positively improved, still with few negative cases, as the responses from Academic Managers show the students have accepted that English is necessary not only to pass a subject but also to have more opportunities in their field.

The majority of the teachers held the view that the ELT Programme is well presented, clear and understandable for them and for the students. There are some problems related with the attitudes from students and the importance they give to learning a second language. This is also reflected in the results from the questionnaire of the students.

Students partially know about the ELT Programme in general. They know that there is an English Department. However, they do not realize about the levels they have to cover in the programme or even the procedures they can fulfill. This might be seen mainly as a lack of communication of internal procedures. Being a large amount of students to attend, the English Department relies on Academic Staff to pass on the information.

Figure 1: answers from students' questionnaire

Q3: I know that there is an English Department in the University

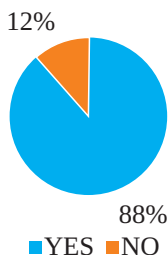
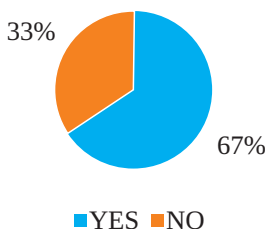


Figure 2: answers from students' questionnaire

Q5: I know how many hours per semester My English classes last





In general, students have a positive view of the ELT Programme, they are aware of the possibilities of learning a language. They see the real application of this knowledge into their professional lives mainly, and the opportunities of educational development they could have access to. There are some areas of improvement for the programme, such as the channels of communication with the English Department, the general procedures, and the implementation of different methodologies.

- Research question 3:

Academic Managers proposed different ideas related to final projects, conversation clubs, integrate technical English. Also, some mentioned the possibility of increasing the level of English. Some of these ideas could be done by reorganizing the current elements of the programme. Among the main areas of improvement are include one more level of English, increase the level required for students when they graduate, integrate ESP (English for Specific Purposes) by adding technical terms and vocabulary related to the careers of the students.

Teachers expressed their ideas about building a community of practice where they could share opinions, frustrations due to the online changes, ideas, etc. This is an important aspect of improvement to consider as this might allow them to feel part of the group and confident to express their thoughts. Teachers also proposed improvements with academic projects that could be easily implemented, and improvements related with online sessions.

Regarding students' views, there were 229 comments in this question, from that amount different topics were identified. 36% of the respondents said that the current ELT Programme is good and they would not change anything. 20% of the students considered Classes more dynamic as an area of improvement: increase speaking activities to lose the fear of talking English in public, interaction. 10% of the students had comments about the time, being the most important: increase the amount of hours a week, increase the hours of sessions (instead of 1 hour daily, 2 hours)

## Conclusions

There are many positive aspects regarding the ELT Programme in the University. First of all is well-perceived by the different stakeholders who participated in this project. In general, the participants are satisfied with the English programme.

According to the view of Academic Managers, students do not see learning English as an imposition for them. This was confirmed in the questionnaire applied to students as they positively accept English as a way to improve their professional possibilities in the future. This was also revealed in the focus group with teachers as they agreed their students are generally motivated to learn English.

There is a good relationship between students-teachers, teachers-academic managers and academic managers, teachers and administration. This has allowed to easily solve any problem within the different stakeholders. The majority of students are satisfied with their English classes. Despite all the difficulties in this contingency, students agreed their online English classes were good.

Based on the different opinions gathered, we will suggest some changes and improvements that could be implemented in the current ELT Programme. We categorized the recommendations according to the Framework called "Language Acquisition Management" by Baldauf et al. (2018). The areas included according to the data obtained were: Access policy, Methods and materials policy and teacher-led policy.

Access policy: As mentioned by Toledo et al. (2018), higher education institutions are in charge of informing the participants about language guidelines, procedures, requirements, etc. For this purpose, channels of communication should be improved. For the Autonomous University of Coahuila, we will recommend improving the current official channels of communication where all the necessary information is available and updated for the stakeholders. A collaboration with the IT Department of the university might be needed to frequently update the information of the ELT Programme.

Methods and materials policy: As López et al. (2015) mention, teachers should develop their autonomy by having the opportunity to choose and adapt materials focusing on their students' needs. They also need to be able to

adapt to the changing contexts and challenges presented.

Enabling them to not only follow the content of the book, but also use relevant material adjusted to the level they teach. This action could allow them to introduce specific content related to the interest of the students. Some universities have included ESP programmes in their curricula, providing the students opportunities for practicing the language in their field of expertise. We would recommend to follow what the Autonomous University of Colima did: create academies where the contents of ESP are designed and implemented in each of the levels for the different backgrounds of the students.

Teacher led policy: Teachers should be included in the decisions and the Administration should promote their autonomy in the classroom. As mentioned by Reeve et al. (2004), teachers should be able to create opportunities to motivate students, by adapting their activities. Teachers should be encouraged to take decisions that impact the performance of their students. As well as including activities they consider necessary to increase students' attention and positive attitudes in the classroom.

Regarding teaching conditions, some Mexican Universities (like the Autonomous University of Guadalajara) have established salary rates according to the teacher qualification level. Adapting a suitable scale for this University would benefit teachers and increase their current conditions. Teachers might be re-categorized according to their certificates, training and current level of English based on acceptable standards for teaching in higher education.

Furthermore, as a further study, we would recommend reviewing the assessment process as well as the current Requirement exam, focusing on the communicative abilities developed throughout the five levels of the programme; not only in systems but also in skills. It would be necessary to evaluate the requirement level to the different faculties of the University taking into account factors such as the level of entrance of the students, the hours they cover in the classes, materials, and the methods employed.

### Limitations

There were some limitations throughout the study related to the focus group sessions and questionnaires sent to students.

About the focus group sessions with academic staff:

1. There was a teacher who had a strong personality that influenced, in a way, the rest of the group with his responses. Because of this, some teachers just agreed with what he was saying. In some of the questions, he was drawing attention to a different issue from the one asked. This might have diverted the attention at some points of the session.

About the focus group sessions with academic managers:

1. At the beginning, it was difficult to set a day and time where they could be available for the session. We had to organize different sessions with different participants involved.

2. Due to their responsibilities, during the session they had some interruptions as they received calls or students at their offices, so it was complicated to have their full attention.

3. We were conscious of bias issues, as sometimes one of us wanted to respond as part of the Academic Team of the English Department, those times I stopped from making inadequate comments and let the participants express their views.

About the questionnaires sent to students:

1. It took more time to gather the information, because at the time we received the authorization to proceed with the data collection, winter break was almost starting and it was difficult to be in contact with students. Only 25% of the sample size answered the questionnaire before the break. The rest did it after the winter break. From the ideal sample size that was 261 students, only 247 answered the questionnaire. This meant 95% of the ideal number.

2. The link to the questionnaire was sent through the gatekeepers, and some of them changed schools after the break. This represented that some of the potential participants were not included, as teachers were not in contact with them. We had to include other schools that were in the same category of students' level of entrance.

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## CAPÍTULO 4

Creencias y prácticas áulicas en la enseñanza de inglés  
en una universidad pública en México

Alexia Alejandra Cárdenas Zavala  
alexia.cardenas@uabc.edu.mx

Universidad Estatal de Sonora, Campus San Luis R.C.

María del Rocío Domínguez Gaona  
rocio\_dominguez@uabc.edu.mx

Universidad Autónoma de Baja California

### Introducción

El presente capítulo abona a los estudios sobre la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en las universidades públicas en México; abordando el caso de la Universidad Estatal de Sonora (UES). Dicho trabajo se enmarca en una investigación cuyo objetivo fue analizar las prácticas pedagógicas del aprendizaje y enseñanza del inglés a fin de poder describir cómo es que se enseña esta lengua en dicha institución. De manera específica, en este capítulo, se reportan los hallazgos del análisis del contraste entre las creencias de un grupo de profesores que participan en el programa de inglés y las observaciones de clase que ellos imparten, con el fin de contrastar la relación entre estos dos aspectos (creencias docentes y prácticas áulicas).

Las prácticas pedagógicas es el tema en el que se ubica este estudio ya que las prácticas áulicas y las creencias los docentes son dos elementos importantes de estas. Al respecto, Turcott (2012) comenta que para la investigación sobre la práctica pedagógica se han adoptado diversos enfoques para analizarla pero que en su mayoría estos estudios se han centrado en realizar una autoevaluación sobre el quehacer docente con miras a poder mejorar los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje e identificar las áreas de oportunidad. Para la autora esta práctica docente o pedagógica es entendida bajo el compromiso de reconocer el propio quehacer del profesor y los saberes construidos en el mismo.

Al momento de analizar las prácticas pedagógicas se requiere analizar

la realidad social desde sus diferentes dimensiones, por tanto, es imposible visualizar las prácticas pedagógicas en un continuo lineal, se requiere hacer desde un continuo Interdimensional donde estas dimensiones convergen de manera que se logre un análisis más completo de ellas. Las prácticas pedagógicas en esta constante relación con elementos distintos, según Pajares (1992) y Johnson (1994) tienen dentro de sus bases y orígenes una relación muy cercana con el trasfondo docente y la experiencia que éste con los años ha conseguido en el contexto educativo y en su práctica y formación.

Es menester mencionar que la práctica pedagógica se entiende entonces como el análisis de una práctica social de lo que se percibe en la realidad de dicho proceso (Turcott, 2012). En estas prácticas se aprecia la existencia de elementos que pueden detectarse a simple vista, elementos observables, y elementos ocultos, es decir, aquellos que no se perciben en la práctica áulica (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cummins, 2000; Tamayo, 2017; Woolfolk, 2016).

Por otro lado, las creencias, otro de los temas centrales de esta investigación, son constructos, ideologías, verdades, concepciones entre otros conceptos, las que dictaminan en gran medida las prácticas pedagógicas que se lleven a cabo. Pues bien, tienden a considerarse como parte sustancial de lo que un individuo cree como verdad y, por tanto, sus experiencias docentes se ven reflejadas en las acciones que considera son viables para su entorno o contexto educativo (Thompson, 1992; Castoriadis, 1997; Moya, 2004). En cuanto al estudio de las creencias de los profesores, se ha encontrado que, a través de los años, los autores han abordado las creencias sobre su trabajo, creencias sobre la materia que imparten, creencias sobre los estudiantes, creencias sobre el profesor mismo y sus diferentes roles (Pajares, 1992; Mo, 2020).

A continuación, se describe el contexto del estudio para una mejor comprensión del planteamiento del problema y su justificación. La Universidad Estatal de Sonora fue la primera institución en México en crear vínculos con el Colegio Canadiense para la incorporación de la plataforma SmrtEnglish a su metodología de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas alrededor del año 2013, buscando adaptar y transformar su enseñanza tradicional del inglés a un enfoque combinado como el que promueve la plataforma SmrtEnglish. Desde el 2013 a la fecha la universidad ha incorporado el uso de la plataforma para sus clases de inglés y con el paso del tiempo se ha tenido registro de nuevas

actualizaciones e incorporación de herramientas que han ayudado al profesor en su labor docente y optimizado el recurso electrónico a fin de poder obtener un mayor beneficio en cuanto a la gestión, administración, distribución y organización de las clases y actividades. Actualmente SmrtEnglish es utilizado alrededor del mundo en 210 instituciones en las cuales están laborando y empleando esta plataforma virtual con más de 7,500 profesores enseñando a más de 310 mil estudiantes. Cabe mencionar que SmrtEnglish fue lanzada al público en enero del 2013 en la UES.

Como evidencia de un estudio que ya se había realizado sobre las creencias de profesores en relación con la plataforma SmrtEnglish se presenta un análisis de Mata y Ruiz (2014) realizado en la UES unidad Hermosillo, en donde se manifiesta que los contenidos de esta plataforma percibidos por los profesores fueron descritos como un programa en línea con un enfoque gramatical, un folleto o compilación de páginas digitalizadas, un programa que carece de contexto y continuidad entre un tema y otro, con modelos muy vacíos en donde no se perciben modelos de comunicación o conversación para que el estudiante pueda utilizar y aplicar, un programa donde tampoco se desarrolla de manera importante la habilidad oral estudiantil, donde se percibe también pocos ejercicios auditivos y más inclinación por el desarrollo del área gramatical.

Cabe señalar que en el año 2014 el programa de la plataforma SmrtEnglish relativamente comenzaba su lanzamiento en la universidad para su uso como parte de la metodología de las clases de inglés. Después de ocho años en la plataforma se han realizado cambios en la estructura y se han agregado nuevas herramientas digitales que facilitan la labor docente. Por ejemplo, la inclusión de recursos para que el profesor pueda tomar asistencia en línea, la automatización de los ejercicios y su revisión de forma inmediata, entre otros.

La UES estipula en los planes de estudios que los alumnos deben cursar la materia de inglés, misma que consta de cinco niveles los cuales equivalen a cinco semestres de su carrera. Si el alumno se retrasa al cursar algún nivel de inglés o bien reprueba la clase puede provocar que la materia de inglés sea uno de los múltiples factores que pueden incidir para que el tiempo de su titulación se prolongue. La UES ha intentado cumplir con el parámetro que deben seguir las universidades reconocidas ante los organismos como el Consejo de



Acreditación de la Educación Superior (COPAES), el cual enfatiza el desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticas en los estudiantes para promover la competitividad; así como con lo que se establece en SEP (2017) en uno de sus objetivos particulares, especialmente el 2, el de establecer como tarea de las universidades fomentar la competencia comunicativa en el idioma inglés del alumnado para efectos de su formación integral y también la competitividad laboral (ANUIES, 2004; Toledo, 2018). En el caso de la UES el nivel de inglés de la mayoría de la población estudiantil es bajo, lo cual se confirmó en este proyecto encontrándose que el 49.8% de alumnos del 5to semestre participantes en el estudio están por debajo de la mínima aprobatoria que se establece en el modelo curricular de la institución, es decir no cumplen con el nivel B2 del MCER estipulado por la UES. Se percibe también que la institución es muy flexible con sus estudiantes en cuanto a los cursos de inglés, ya que no se aplica ningún examen estandarizado que compruebe la fiabilidad de las calificaciones ponderadas a los estudiantes de la materia de inglés al culminar los cinco niveles.

El aprendizaje del inglés se ha considerado indispensable y necesario para las relaciones sociales, internacionales y laborales. Además, es sabido que existen algunos estudios que reportan que México es uno de los países que se encuentran en el ranking más bajo con relación a la competitividad laboral y el dominio del inglés. Por lo tanto, el aprendizaje de esta lengua es vista como un requerimiento en las habilidades del ser humano para su desenvolvimiento en diferentes áreas (Toledo et al., 2022; Education First, 2021; Stanton, 2021; Montaña et al., 2020; Fierro y Martínez, 2014).

La importancia de realizar esta investigación en la UES responde a la necesidad de identificar y caracterizar las prácticas pedagógicas del aprendizaje y enseñanza del inglés con el fin de entender este fenómeno y poder explicar y describir lo que ocurre. El interés inicial para desarrollar este trabajo surge de la necesidad de explorar de manera minuciosa algunos de los elementos o factores que inciden en la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en esta institución pública y explicar la realidad en este contexto ya que no existen estudios actualizados sobre el tema en la unidad San Luis R.C. En este caso se apostó por el análisis de las prácticas áulicas y las creencias de los docentes debido a que se consideró que generar conocimiento de esta índole podría coadyuvar en la reflexión docente y promover estrategias de mejora en la

calidad de las prácticas pedagógicas que se gestan en la institución educativa.

Asimismo, este tipo de estudios generan conocimiento sobre el aprendizaje y enseñanza del inglés el cual permite guiar la tarea de esta y otras universidades, que consiste en formar jóvenes competentes que demuestren habilidades lingüísticas y dominio sobre la lengua inglesa (Toledo et al., 2018). Contribuye de igual forma al fortalecimiento de los procesos de enseñanza del inglés en las universidades ya que al describir lo que ocurre en el aula se entiende mejor el fenómeno y se pueden tomar decisiones de manera informada.

Para el desarrollo de esta parte de la investigación se estableció como objetivo analizar la relación entre las prácticas áulicas en la enseñanza del inglés y las creencias de los profesores sobre el aprendizaje del inglés y el uso de la tecnología en esta universidad y poder así responder a la pregunta de investigación ¿Cuál es la relación entre las creencias de los profesores y las prácticas áulicas?

## **Revisión de la literatura**

La enseñanza del inglés en México y las universidades

En el estudio presentado por Cronquist y Fiszben (2017), los resultados de los exámenes y las evaluaciones indican que el dominio del inglés en México es muy bajo. El estudio muestra en sus resultados que el sistema educativo carece de estudiantes con los niveles necesarios de dominio del inglés y, aunado a esta problemática indica que las escuelas con frecuencia son incapaces de ofrecer las clases de inglés necesarias y aquellas que lo hacen carecen de calidad educativa. Un hallazgo del cual se hace mención en este estudio presentado por Croquist y Fiszben (2017), es el hecho de que en México ha habido poco progreso en cuanto a la evaluación del dominio del inglés y lo poco que se ha logrado o hecho, no ha sido suficiente. De igual manera se señala en el estudio que México carece de estándares educativos para los profesores, por ello es difícil decir que se cuenta con profesores cualificados. Los autores mencionan que existe una gran demanda de profesores de inglés en América Latina y, aunque existen una gran cantidad de programas para la capacitación de profesores de inglés, la calidad puede variar y por lo general se señala a la mayoría como deficiente. Por ejemplo, Colombia, Panamá y Perú cuentan con

programas nacionales en curso para que los profesores de inglés reciban capacitación en el extranjero (Croquist y Fiszben, 2017). En una tabla presentada por los autores, se identifica que México se posiciona dentro de los 8 países de América Latina con bajo nivel en inglés.

De igual manera, en lo que respecta a la competitividad laboral, Pearson (2013) reporta que México se encuentra en un nivel principiante de inglés. Por otra parte, con esta misma idea el portal Education First, dentro de su English Proficiency Index (EPI) (2020), el cual es un reporte que se realiza anualmente alrededor del mundo para conocer las posiciones con respecto al dominio del inglés, muestra que, entre los países de América Latina, México se encuentra en el lugar 92, colocándose como uno de los países con nivel bajo.

Por otro lado, no cabe duda de que el aprendizaje del inglés se ha convertido en un conocimiento indispensable y necesario para las relaciones internacionales, los negocios y el sector laboral en México. Es por ello, que esta investigación se interesa por el análisis de las prácticas pedagógicas y las creencias docentes que puedan afectar el objetivo primordial establecido en México desde 1926 por la Secretaría de Educación y Cultura; el aprendizaje del inglés.

Es importante considerar que México y Costa Rica fueron los primeros países de América Latina en establecer como obligatoria la enseñanza del inglés en secundaria (Croquist y Fiszben, 2017). Es por eso que como país pionero en establecer la enseñanza del inglés en esta parte del mundo, debería ser ejemplo de éxito y demostrar competencia lingüística elevada. Sería ideal tener resultados alentadores que demuestran que se ha aprovechado al máximo la oportunidad de enseñar de manera oficial un idioma extranjero, sin embargo, las estadísticas muestran lo contrario.

En México se han originado programas que han alentado el mejoramiento del aprendizaje del inglés en la comunidad estudiantil de nivel superior y a las instituciones que las conforman. Un ejemplo de estos es Servicios Educativos Integrados al Estado de México (SEIEM) que es un grupo de trabajo que diseña planes y programas de estudio para las escuelas de educación superior, cuyo objetivo es homogeneizar los procesos educativos con el propósito de formar íntegramente a los egresados y aportar a sus procesos educativos especialmente favoreciendo su competitividad laboral al integrarse

en la sociedad (Cortina, s.f).

Por otra parte, en el periódico Oficial Gaceta del gobierno del Estado de México (2016), se expidió un acuerdo en el que se indica la creación de un programa llamado "Comunidad de inglés y computación para todos en el Estado de México" para el año 2017. Este programa se enfoca en canalizar los conocimientos de inglés y computación de los estudiantes y prestadores de servicio social y egresados de instituciones públicas del estado de México de tipos media superior y superior en beneficio de los alumnos de educación básica de los subsistemas federales y estatales, cuya finalidad se concentra en motivar el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, en este caso el inglés y el uso de la tecnología.

#### La práctica pedagógica

Desde los años 1920-1930 cuando Vygotsky desarrolla la teoría sociocultural, desde ese momento se visualizó el aprendizaje del individuo como resultado de una interacción social, en donde el resultado del aprendizaje se le atribuye al fenómeno de socializar y desarrollarse en su entorno. Sin una relación social con el entorno Vygotsky suponía que no podía haber un aprendizaje comprometido.

Cummins (2000) propone que las micro interacciones que se llevan a cabo en la sociedad en general influyen en las formas en que los docentes definen sus roles dentro del sistema educativo y las estructuras pedagógicas que utilizan para ello. Estas micro interacciones forman un espacio interaccional e interpersonal en donde la adquisición del conocimiento y su formación es construida. Las relaciones que tienen los participantes de este nivel (micro interactivo) son compartidas y las mentes y las identidades de cada individuo convergen a fin de poder crear conocimientos nuevos individuales, en relación con los intereses de los que participan en ella.

El estudio de Cummins (2000) sugiere que las negociaciones de identidad y las interacciones entre los educadores y los estudiantes son relevantes para el éxito académico o la deserción estudiantil. Scott et al. (2009) han estudiado las prácticas pedagógicas como un proceso social donde las experiencias de aprendizaje serán aprendidas bajo una percepción de construcción de conocimiento que dependerá de lo que suceda en el nivel micro

interactivo del aula, mismo que se sujeta a las experiencias macro interactivas del contexto que rodea a cada docente y estudiante.

En un esquema propuesto por Tamayo (2017) para el análisis de la práctica pedagógica se identifican niveles de análisis, cómo también han sido mostrados en (Cummins, 2000; Bronfenbrenner 1979; Woolfolk;2016). Tamayo (2017) la contempla como una práctica social, la cual está constituida por tres dimensiones: macro pedagógica, meso-pedagógica y micro pedagógica. La macro pedagógica aborda la perspectiva de la interacción del docente con la complejidad de la dimensión sociocultural y política de la educación. La meso- pedagógica se refiere al contexto institucional y el trabajo docente en situaciones reales y en la cotidianidad. Finalmente, la micro pedagógica aborda al docente como sujeto y actor de la práctica, estudia su dimensión individual e identidad.

Al momento de analizar las prácticas pedagógicas se requiere analizar la realidad social desde sus diferentes dimensiones, por tanto, es imposible visualizar las prácticas pedagógicas en un continuo lineal, se requiere hacer desde un continuo inter dimensional donde estas dimensiones convergen a medida de conseguir un análisis más completo de ellas. De esta manera la interacción de los sujetos permite entender que la relación de sus estructuras no es determinantes ni eternas y están en constante transformación (Tamayo, 2017).

Éstas tres dimensiones (micro pedagógica, meso-pedagógica y macro pedagógica) se entrelazan de una manera que puedan ejercer la "acción" involucrando los elementos fundamentales para el proceso educativo. Es decir, ejercer la acción correspondiente dependiendo del rol que están desarrollando en ese momento, si es el de docente, estudiante, familias, institución, etc. No obstante, es necesario mencionar que estas aportaciones como la de Tamayo (2017) ejemplifican la manera en la que la práctica pedagógica se conforma y tomando como referencia los elementos que se consideran en ella, es que se delimita para este estudio solo el de creencias y prácticas áulicas.

Estudios como el que realiza Pinta y Bastidas (2015) sobre la práctica pedagógica del docente de inglés de la institución educativa de Chachagüí demuestra que la práctica de los profesores y lo que se estipula en el programa de bilingüismo en esa institución muestran discrepancias y se debe analizar sus

contenidos y reestructurar la metodología de enseñanza actual. Otro estudio que fue realizado en la universidad sur colombiana, se analizó también la práctica pedagógica de sus docentes de inglés con el fin de caracterizarlas en cuanto al uso de ellas en el aula. Como resultado se obtuvo prácticas pre comunicativas utilizadas por este grupo de profesores estudiado.

Lo anterior, demuestra la importancia de seguir estudiando el campo de lenguas y la práctica pedagógica del docente de inglés, a medida de reflexionar sobre lo que ocurre y seguir promoviendo mejores prácticas para el alumnado, sin perder de vista que estos procesos complejos educativos como el de aprender una lengua extranjera, enmarcan una responsabilidad importante sobre la mejora continua y la evolución de prácticas y concepciones de nuevas creencias, debido a las realidades que con el paso del tiempo se van transformando y evolucionando como el fenómeno social como el que se considera.

#### Las creencias docentes

Para poder entender cómo han sido estudiadas las creencias de los profesores de inglés en relación con el estudio de la lengua, es primordial considerar qué es lo que se entiende por creencia. Creencia puede ser una idea verdadera o falsa, este concepto involucra lo que en realidad es verdadero, y lo que se tiene por verdadero, el concepto de creencia pone en tela de juicio la verdad objetiva y lo que se considera verdadero, y lo que se entiende precisamente entre estos dos puntos (Moya, 2004). El autor hace la reflexión sobre el hecho de que al momento de pensar que podemos estar en un error es necesario tener una creencia sobre ello, pero para poder tener esa posibilidad de error, es necesario entender lo que se tiene por verdad y considerarlo. Es decir, debemos entonces captar la distinción entre la realidad y lo subjetivo para poder tener una creencia sobre algo.

Asimismo para que el concepto de creencia se pueda entender, es necesaria la distinción entre creencia y conocimiento, no obstante Clandinin y Connelly (1987, citados en Pajares, 1992) encontraron en una investigación que existe una desconcertante variedad de términos entre estos dos conceptos, en donde se incluye los criterios de enseñanza de los profesores, los principios de la práctica pedagógica, sus constructos y teorías epistemológicas, las

creencias, perspectivas, concepciones conocimiento personal, conocimiento práctico, además de su propio término sobre el conocimiento en el área de instrucción, que giran en relación a lo que se experimenta como docente de lenguas. En todos estos conceptos el autor menciona que es difícil entender en dónde termina el conocimiento y donde comienza la creencia. No obstante Pajares (1992) considera que la formación de las creencias depende de varios factores que emanan de la experiencia de la realidad a la que están expuestos los docentes. Es decir, dependiendo del contexto en el que el profesor se involucre y la experiencia docente que tenga, serán los constructos claves que se basarán para la creación de las creencias que tenga sobre la enseñanza de lenguas, en este caso.

En el estudio que presentan Romero et al., (2015) sobre las creencias de los profesores de una universidad pública mexicana ante la autonomía del aprendizaje de lenguas a fin de que éstas puedan apoyar en su labor docente, se encontró que los docentes no tienen un concepto claro del aprendizaje autodirigido y de las estrategias idóneas para ello. Este es un ejemplo de estudios que abonan en el campo de las creencias puesto que las mismas son parte de lo que se cree ideal y lo que se impartirá en el aula por parte del profesor. En otro estudio de Gómez (2017), se indaga por otra parte las creencias, pero del estudiante en el contexto universitario al aprender una segunda lengua, en el que se buscó que lo que surgiera del estudio sirva al profesor para darse una idea sobre lo que se debe reformular en la práctica docente en relación con lo que los estudiantes creen sobre el proceso. Estudios como los anteriores, nos enmarcan la importancia y la relación tan estrecha entre las creencias y las prácticas áulicas, de igual forma el seguir indagando para reformular, repensar, reflexionar y contribuir al proceso de adquisición de una lengua extranjera.

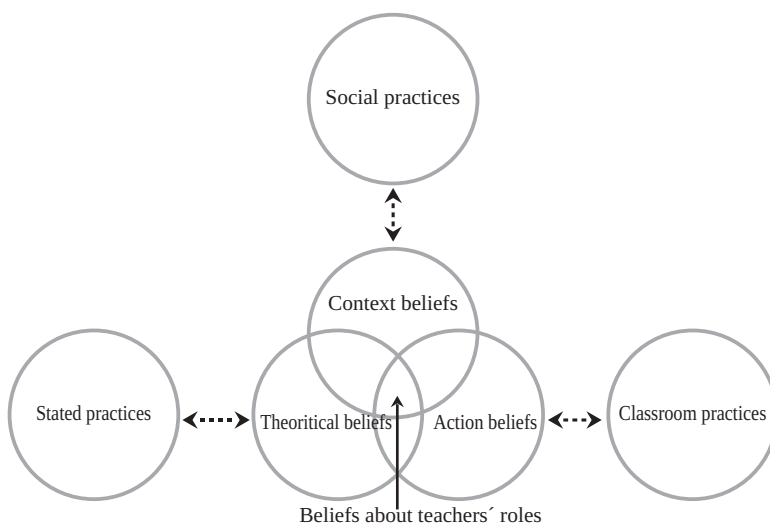
Existen creencias del profesor de lenguas sobre su trabajo, algunas otras se enfocarán a la materia, otras en los estudiantes, responsabilidades y los roles que el profesor debe cumplir, es así como una gran cantidad y variedad de concepciones sobre las creencias en la educación han aparecido en el estudio de la literatura (Pajares, 1992). Las creencias han sido estudiadas con diferentes nombres, algunos autores las llaman, perspectivas docentes, otras ideologías de la enseñanza, interpretaciones y experiencias o bien creencias docentes y sus teorías, una gran variedad de conceptos, pero todos refiriéndose al

conocimiento real y la creencia docente.

Por otra parte, Mo (2020) considera que el analizar las creencias de los profesores es un proceso multifacético, dinámico y complejo puesto que existe un modelo de creencias que se basa en: creencias teóricas, creencias de acción y creencias de contexto, mismas que son reflejadas en las prácticas establecidas, prácticas del aula y prácticas sociales, respectivamente.

Figura 1

Marco de referencia para el análisis de las creencias del profesor



Nota: figura tomada de Mo (2020) Teaching Reading and teacher's beliefs. A sociocultural perspective (p.60).

El modelo que presenta Mo (2020) no es un modelo que se ocupe de teorizar los tipos de creencias que pueden encontrarse en la práctica del profesor, sino de analizar el resultado de estas creencias al momento de que éstas se relacionan entre sí. en la que esas creencias se relacionan. Lo anterior, con el fin de que el modelo pueda describir la complejidad de ellas al momento de fusionarse y ejercerse en el aula. El modelo se basa en un enfoque ontológico de las conexiones y relaciones entre este tipo de creencias que se enmarcan en la figura 1 y a su vez, describe el resultado al entrelazarse estos tipos de creencias



al momento de ejercer la práctica. Por lo tanto, el considerar el modelo de Mo (2020) en este estudio permite describir cómo el tipo de creencias docentes de UES se relacionan con la práctica áulica del docente de inglés. Puesto que se entiende que la aplicación de ellas impacta en el resultado de lo que se encuentra en las clases observadas. Tal como se encontró en el estudio sobre el impacto de las creencias de profesores y su incidencia en la práctica áulica presentado por Quevedo et al. (2013), se describe que entre los resultados se encontró que muy probablemente las creencias que los pedagogos han presentado con el paso de los años guíen la práctica del profesor en su toma de decisiones y no solamente representen un discurso desarticulado de sus prácticas. En este estudio de Quevedo et al. (2013) también se encontró que existe un grado importante de coherencia entre las creencias de los profesores y las prácticas que fueron observadas en sus clases.

## **Metodología**

Este trabajo se posiciona dentro de las investigaciones de carácter mixto ya que se empleó el método cuantitativo y el cualitativo para recabar y analizar la información (Hernández-Sampieri, 2018). Las rutas mixtas son el resultado de la convergencia de los dos enfoques; este tipo de métodos son conocidos también como estudios híbridos, y representan un conjunto de procesos sistemáticos, empíricos y críticos de investigación. Debido a la naturaleza de esta investigación se consideró que su alcance es descriptivo y exploratorio, puesto que se describen tanto las prácticas áulicas como las creencias en un intento para explorar la enseñanza de inglés en la institución. Cabe mencionar que hasta el momento en la UES unidad San Luis Rio Colorado no se han realizado estudios similares que aporten información sobre este tema.

Para el desarrollo de este estudio, se consideraron 2 técnicas; la encuesta y la observación. Se consideró la validez de contenido para los instrumentos empleados. Los jueces fueron seleccionados por su experiencia en el área de conocimiento de las lenguas. Dentro de la validación de contenido del instrumento de la lista de cotejo para la observación se evaluaron los ítems de acuerdo con pertinencia y claridad. Para poder revisar y dar validez y confiabilidad a los ítems del instrumento de creencias se calculó el alfa de

Cronbach.

Para la observación de clases se diseñó una lista de cotejo y un cuestionario basado en una escala de Likert para indagar las creencias docentes en el aprendizaje del inglés. El cuestionario fue aplicado a 16 de los 18 profesores que conforman el gremio de inglés en UES y se observaron a 8 de ellos en el periodo 2021-2. La muestra fue 18 profesores de inglés pertenecientes a la planta docente correspondiente al departamento de licenciado en enseñanza del inglés, son profesores de tiempo completo y nombramiento determinado con asignación directa, mismos que son contratados en cada inicio de periodo escolar. En las observaciones clase se empleó la técnica de observación dirigida no participante con el fin de documentar lo que ocurre en las clases de inglés que imparten los profesores de la UES. La observación no participante consiste en observar sin estar dentro del grupo social que se estudia, simplemente se observa y está mediada por instrumentos, en este caso la lista de cotejo (Campos y Lule, 2012).

Se empleó una muestra por conveniencia, misma que se ubica entre las técnicas de muestreo no probabilísticas, las cuales "buscan la selección de aquellos casos accesibles que acepten ser incluidos. Esto con fundamento en la conveniente accesibilidad y proximidad de los sujetos investigadores" (Otzen y Manterola, 2017, p.230).

El análisis que se empleó con los datos cuantitativos emanados del cuestionario docente fue de carácter estadístico-descriptivo con apoyo de la codificación axial. En la codificación axial se busca descubrir las categorías más mencionadas y de esta manera dar pauta a la agrupación de las categorías más generales (Palacios, 2016). Para las observaciones de clase se realizó el análisis de contenido describiendo lo observado con apoyo de la identificación de frecuencias de las categorías que emanaron de la lista de cotejo. Acto seguido, se procedió a la realización de inferencias de los análisis efectuados y al cruce de los resultados encontrados analizando la relación que tiene las creencias de los docentes de los diferentes aspectos con las prácticas áulicas y cómo impactan estas concepciones en el actuar docente y el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

## Resultados

En el análisis que se realizó sobre la relación entre las creencias de los docentes y sus prácticas áulicas, se detectaron algunas coincidencias y discrepancias que nos brindan un panorama sobre la forma en que se está enseñando inglés en la institución, información que se espera apoye a la academia de inglés para las futuras mejoras al proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de este idioma.

A continuación, se reportan los resultados preliminares por cada una de las dimensiones que emanaron del cruce de información: estrategias y actividades, recursos educativos, teorías de enseñanza aprendizaje, formación y compromisos docentes y comunicación (docente-alumno).

### Estrategias y actividades

Machado y Montes de Oca (2011) señalan que las estrategias son consideradas en un nivel más general a diferencia de las técnicas, que se podría decir se ubican en un nivel más específico. Los autores especifican que las técnicas suelen percibirse como los procedimientos para la consecución de un objetivo; son también, procedimientos específicos que se aplican a la estrategia en general. Debido a lo anterior, se consideró necesario incluir en el análisis ya que la forma en que se utilizan es parte fundamental del proceso de enseñanza para poder lograr que el alumno se apropie del conocimiento y se llegue a un aprendizaje significativo en la adquisición de la lengua puesto que facilitan el procesamiento y apropiación de la información, sin olvidar que en todo proceso de aprendizaje existen especificaciones peculiares para cada uno de los estudiantes en cuanto a sus estilos propios de aprendizaje.

Tabla 1

### Resultados sobre la dimensión; estrategias y actividades

Porcentaje	Creencia docente	Observación de clase
<b>87.6%</b>	Cree que en el uso de estrategias debe considerarse los estilos del aprendizaje del alumno	Inclinación en estilos visuales y auditivos
<b>93.8%</b>	Cree que se debe propiciar la comunicación e interacción dentro del aula.	Sí se desarrolla métodos colaborativos, pero la interacción entre el alumnado es poco percibida en general.
<b>100%</b>	Cree que la competencia comunicativa se fomentará con el empleo de actividades y estrategias comunicativas en el aula.	Inclinación hacia el área gramatical.

Al respecto se encontró en los resultados como se observa en la tabla 1, que las creencias docentes señalan que un 87.6% cree que deben hacer uso de estrategias tomando en cuenta el estilo de aprendizaje del alumno, sin embargo, en las observaciones se identificó cierta inclinación sobre estilos visuales y auditivos en la mayoría de las clases, sin considerar que seguramente se tienen estudiantes con otros estilos de aprendizaje preferentes. Se cree importante el considerar muy bien la elección de las estrategias y actividades y reflexionar en la medida de lo posible las que están utilizándose en este contexto.

También se observa en la tabla 1 que el 93.8% de los docentes cree que debe propiciar la comunicación e interacción dentro del aula, no obstante, se detecta que sí se desarrollan métodos colaborativos y grupales, pero la interacción entre el alumnado es poca. Asimismo, el 100 % de los docentes reportaron que la competencia comunicativa se fomentará con el empleo de actividades y estrategias comunicativas en el aula, sin embargo, existe una inclinación hacia el área gramatical, por lo tanto, se considera que falta mayor aplicación de habilidades comunicativas entre estudiantes.

Recursos educativos Se cree importante la incorporación de este apartado puesto que se ha encontrado que las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (TIC) han abonado a la flexibilidad académica por parte del docente y del estudiante a su vez, proveen a los estudiantes las oportunidades de experimentar situaciones reales para poner en práctica la lengua que estudian (Martos y Teruel, 2018; Motteram y Thomas, 2010). Huedo (2013) enfatiza la importancia de analizar y preparar con anticipación cualquier actividad elegida para su inserción en clase, y con más énfasis cuando se trata del uso de tecnología, lo anterior para cumplir con las necesidades del grupo de alumnos y lograr aprendizajes significativos de utilidad.

Tabla 2

Resultados sobre la dimensión; Recursos educativos

Porcentaje	Creencia docente	Observación de clase
80%	Cree que las plataformas facilitan su labor dentro del aula y son fáciles de emplear	El 100% de los docentes demostró gusto por la plataforma y no hubo problemas técnicos
56.3%	Cree que los estudiantes realizan más rápido las actividades con la plataforma	Los estudiantes no realizaron más rápido los ejercicios en ninguna de las clases observadas

Como se puede observar en la tabla 2 el 80% de los docentes cree que las plataformas facilitan su labor dentro del aula y son fáciles de emplear. Al respecto, se encontró en las observaciones que el 100% de los docentes demostraron gusto en el empleo de la plataforma y no presentaron problemas técnicos para su uso.

Asimismo, en la tabla 2 se señala que el 56.3% de los docentes cree que los estudiantes realizan más rápido las actividades con la plataforma, sin embargo en este estudio se percibió que al momento de la práctica, los estudiantes no realizan más rápido las actividades en plataforma puesto que algunos de ellos presentan problemas de internet y accesibilidad en sus dispositivos electrónicos, en algunos otros casos el tiempo no alcanzaba para dar respuesta a las actividades debido a que se tenía que aclarar dudas del tema, o repetir la información para su mayor comprensión, ocasionando lo anterior que las actividades se agendaron para el día siguiente. Dentro de otro de los resultados en esta dimensión se encontró que el 100% de los docentes creen que la plataforma facilita la labor docente en relación con la gestión dentro del aula, hecho que coincide con lo observado en las clases, puesto que ningún docente presentó problemas en cuanto al manejo de la plataforma y mostró habilidad tecnológica en su uso.

### Teorías de enseñanza y aprendizaje

Brown (2007) considera que el hecho de enseñar un nuevo idioma concierne a un proceso complejo que implica entender cómo es que el aprendizaje de una lengua debe ser entendido, qué es una lengua, qué es el aprendizaje de una lengua y el contexto en el que este debe darse. Las investigaciones sobre el tema han dado lugar a las teorías de aprendizaje y enseñanza de lenguas, explicando así la forma cómo ocurren estos procesos desde distintas perspectivas: educativa, psicológica, sociológica, entre otras. Por lo anterior, se creyó necesario abordar las teorías de aprendizaje de inglés ya que abona de manera sustanciosa a este estudio. En relación con esta dimensión, el 81.3% de los docentes creen que los estudiantes motivados participan con mayor frecuencia, esto podríamos considerarlo como una creencia alineada a lo que los expertos en el área de lenguas han aportado (Brown, 2007; Woolfolk, 2013); sin embargo, al momento de observar las

clases se percibió que alrededor de 3 o 4 alumnos participan solamente de manera voluntaria y con iniciativa. En otros casos, los alumnos participaban cuando el profesor les solicitaba alguna lectura, o apoyo con algún aspecto de la clase, pero solamente una minoría presentó motivación hacia la participación voluntaria. Lo anterior podría significar que los profesores a pesar de que creen que la motivación es importante para el aprendizaje de la lengua, no están implementando actividades que motiven a que el estudiante participe.

Otro de los aspectos analizados fue sobre la interacción en el aula. Tsui (2015) considera que tiene gran impacto la interacción que se lleva a cabo en la clase de lenguas, puesto que de ello dependerá la adquisición del idioma. Considerando esto como parte importante del proceso. Dada la importancia en este aspecto, en el estudio como se señala en la tabla 3 se encontró que el 81% de los profesores cree que se debe promover la interacción dentro del aula de inglés, sin embargo, se observó que existe una carencia de actividades interactivas entre el alumnado con contextos reales de aprendizaje o situaciones de la vida cotidiana.

Tabla 3

Resultados sobre la dimensión; Teorías de enseñanza y aprendizaje

<i>Porcentaje</i>	<i>Creencia docente</i>	<i>Observaciones de clase</i>
<b>81.3%</b>	Cree que los estudiantes motivados participan con mayor frecuencia	Alrededor de 3 o 4 alumnos en aulas de 20 a 25 alumnos, participan de forma voluntaria.
<b>81%</b>	Cree que se debe de promover la interacción en el aula de inglés	Se observó carencia de actividades interactivas entre el alumnado.
<b>19%</b>	Cree que solo se aprende con repetición y observación	Más del 19% trabajó a base de repetición de estructuras y lectura de información mediante la observación.

Se detectó que la mayoría de las intervenciones grupales interactivas eran alineadas al repaso de la gramática de una manera oral con estructuras proporcionadas por la misma plataforma SmrtEnglish pero no hacia el implemento de conversaciones de la vida cotidiana que pudieran promover el desarrollo de otras habilidades del pensamiento en cuanto al idioma que fortalezcan el proceso de adquisición del inglés.

De igual forma se encontró que el 19% de los profesores creen que solo se aprende con repetición y observación, sin embargo se observó que en varias clases los alumnos practicaban una conversación proporcionada por la plataforma y revisaban pronunciación a base de observación, sin contemplarse

actividades extras que fomentaran de una manera más óptima y provechosa el aprendizaje de nuevo vocabulario, es decir se percibió una limitación de ejercicios y el uso solamente exclusivo de la información de plataforma, cayendo en una metodología mecánica; repetición y observación Ver tabla 3.

#### Formación y compromisos docentes

Respecto a esta dimensión el 100 % de los profesores cree que un docente de lenguas debe mostrar un buen manejo de grupo y fomentar valores en el aula. Se encontró que efectivamente, todos los docentes contribuyeron con un buen manejo del orden dentro del aula y capacidad de liderazgo. Demostraron patrones similares de organización de sus clases en donde se percibieron actividades de inicio, desarrollo y cierre en todas las clases observadas. Páez (2001) y Borg (2006) hacen referencia a ciertas características y cualidades que el profesor de lenguas debe considerar para ejercer su profesión de la manera correcta cumpliendo con ciertos aspectos que son exclusivos de todo profesor de lenguas, lo recabado en las observaciones demuestra pues, la habilidad de los docentes de inglés de la UES y la buena planeación de sus clases brindando buenos ambientes de aprendizaje y patrones similares en conjunto lo que caracteriza un trabajo armonioso en cuanto a esta dimensión.

#### Comunicación (docente-alumno)

Establecer una buena relación comunicativa entre docente y alumno en el proceso de aprendizaje de una nueva lengua es crucial y puede dirigir el aprendizaje a una mejor motivación, interés, y mejores áreas de oportunidad para la adquisición (Buskist et al., 2022; Frisby y Martin, 2010).

En los resultados dentro de esta dimensión se encontró que el 100% de los docentes cree que los profesores deben dominar el idioma y siempre hablar en la lengua meta. En las observaciones de clase se pudo observar aciertos en cuanto a estas creencias; los profesores muestran un dominio de la materia y el idioma, demostrando su experiencia docente, asimismo, todos los docentes siempre mantuvieron la postura de hablar en la lengua meta con sus estudiantes, no obstante se percibieron algunas situaciones por ejemplo de aclaración de

cierto vocabulario o definiciones, de explicación de estructuras nuevas gramaticales en donde el docente en muy pocas ocasiones sí recurre a la aclaración o explicación parcial de lo mencionado en la lengua materna Ver tabla 4.

Tabla 4

Resultados sobre la dimensión; comunicación (docente-alumno)

<i>Porcentaje</i>	<i>Creencia docente</i>	<i>Observaciones de clase</i>
<b>100%</b>	Cree que debe dominar el idioma de instrucción	Todos los profesores muestran dominio sobre el idioma y la materia.
<b>100%</b>	Cree que siempre se debe de hablar en la lengua meta con los estudiantes	El idioma inglés siempre fue utilizado con los estudiantes. Todos los profesores solamente recurrían al español para aclaraciones de significado o explicación gramatical en donde hubiera dudas.

Se percibió también que, en el proceso de enseñanza, los estudiantes al momento de que sus profesores hablan en el idioma inglés y expresan alguna instrucción sobre la actividad, ellos sí entienden las instrucciones en inglés, no obstante, los alumnos no utilizan el idioma para expresarse y entablar una comunicación con el profesor. Los estudiantes siempre se comunican en el idioma español, a menos que sea alguna participación de lectura en donde deba dar lectura a información en inglés. Beare (2018) señala la importancia de que el alumno utilice el idioma inglés, puesto que el hecho de no utilizarlo puede provocar consecuencias como la de no desarrollar la competencia lingüística, por ejemplo; distracción al utilizar la lengua materna habilidad de pensar en inglés al no utilizar tampoco el idioma para comunicarse, puesto que dicho por el autor la única manera de conseguir la fluidez del idioma es haciendo uso de él dentro del aula.

Otras generalidades

Entre las coincidencias entre las creencias de los docentes y las observaciones clase, se encontró que los profesores son un modelo de la lengua para los estudiantes, organizan su clase siguiendo patrones similares, emplean distintas estrategias didácticas colaborativas y grupales y ejercen la metodología sugerida en cuanto al uso de la plataforma educativa para el inglés. En las discrepancias entre las creencias docentes y las observaciones clase ubicamos que las prácticas pedagógicas presentan una inclinación hacia



el ejercicio de la gramática y carencia en actividades con promoción de la comunicación, no se visualiza el empleo de recursos ni actividades auténticas y poco se promueve la interacción entre los estudiantes para desarrollar las habilidades comunicativas, esto debido a la saturación de actividades inclinadas al área gramatical promovidas por la plataforma empleada. Lo anterior nos permite concluir que la mayoría de los profesores actúan en conformidad con lo que creen; sin embargo, hay situaciones que requieren de reflexión y atención por parte de la universidad.

## Conclusiones

La relación entre las creencias y la práctica docente en este estudio ha permitido que se pueda apreciar la relación existente entre lo que cree el profesor y lo que hace dentro del aula. Lo anterior como un resultado del bagaje y la experiencia docente de sus propias creencias, mismo hecho que hemos comentado tiene impacto sustancial en su actuar. Este estudio ha identificado que las prácticas áulicas se caracterizan por contar con profesores con perfil idóneo en enseñanza en lenguas o carrera afín. También se caracterizan por poseer una sincronía en el ritmo en el que las clases se desarrollan incorporando actividades de inicio, desarrollo y cierre. Además, los docentes demuestran conocimientos de la lengua y la cultura resaltando sus destrezas cognitivas en la aplicación de diferentes técnicas de enseñanza y demostrando que sus creencias están alineadas a lo que los especialistas en lenguas y autores importantes en el campo han aportado. Los docentes de la institución demuestran aptitudes para la implementación y el uso de la plataforma para el inglés que utiliza la universidad, a pesar de que ni la universidad ni el sitio web de SmrtEnglish poseen un manual de ejecución y manejo que el docente pueda consultar cuando tenga dudas sobre su empleo. El docente de la universidad se entera del funcionamiento de la plataforma por medio de capacitaciones aisladas por parte del colegio canadiense 1 o 2 veces al año y por su experiencia conforme al paso de los años por ensayo y error.

No obstante, las prácticas áulicas también demuestran algunos aspectos pendientes por trabajar, como lo es el desarrollo de actividades en contextos reales donde el modelo basado en competencias que promueve la institución se pueda apreciar. De igual forma la incorporación por parte del

docente de recursos alternos a la plataforma y proveer más alternativas al estudiante que no limiten su aprendizaje solo al área gramatical, sino al desarrollo oral de la lengua con estrategias interactivas y cognitivas que los convierta en sus promotores principales del aprendizaje.

La mayoría de las creencias de los profesores de UES comulgan con el ejercicio de su práctica pedagógica, sin embargo, todavía existen aspectos pendientes por trabajar como el desarrollo de estrategias y técnicas comunicativas para las actividades con el alumnado, el diálogo e interacción entre ellos, de manera que se potencialicen y optimicen los recursos con los que se cuentan para la adquisición del idioma.

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## CAPÍTULO 5

Enseñanza de Español en Municipios Fronterizos entre  
Brasil y Argentina, Educación Intercultural Bilingüe

Rosangela Kuspiesz Calliari

rosangela.kuspiesz@hotmail.com

Universidad Estatal del Centro-Oeste - UNICENTRO

Cibele Krause Lemke

cklemke@unicentro.br

Universidad Estatal del Centro-Oeste - UNICENTRO

### Introducción

De los municipios brasileños paranaenses, que hacen frontera con territorios argentinos, el más conocido de ellos es Foz do Iguaçu, localizado en el extremo oeste de Paraná; según datos del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística (IBGE)<sup>1</sup> tenía una población estimada de 258.248.000 habitantes en 2020. Hay también otros nueve municipios paranaenses que hacen frontera lineal solamente con la Argentina, que son: Barracão (10.312), Bom Jesus do Sul (3.506), Capanema (19.148), Perola do Oeste (6.288), Planalto (13.431), Pranchita (5.095), Santo Antônio do Sudoeste (20.261), São Miguel do Iguaçu (27.576), Serranópolis do Iguaçu (4.477). Con concentraciones poblacionales bien menores, si comparadas a Foz do Iguaçu, todos ellos son municipios de línea de frontera, y, como tales, también poseen peculiaridades lingüísticas, debido a la proximidad con hablantes de otro idioma.

La mayoría de las investigaciones que tratan temas como enseñanza de lenguas y políticas lingüísticas en municipios de frontera dentro del Paraná, se realizan en la ciudad de Foz do Iguaçu. Hay otros municipios que merecen atención, pues juntos suman un total de 368.342 mil habitantes, que tienen contacto diariamente con la lengua española y sus variaciones, tanto en las relaciones interpersonales, económicas, educativas u otras, presentando una mayor diversidad lingüística y la necesidad de conocer más acerca de ese

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<sup>1</sup> Información extraída del sitio web del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística. Disponible en: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/pr/panorama>. Acceso en: 19 mar. 2021.

idioma. Este hecho refuerza la importancia de la enseñanza de la lengua con calidad, a fin de que la comunicación entre las personas se desarrolle de la manera más eficiente posible. Con la derogación de la Ley 11.161<sup>2</sup>, que "aseguraba la oferta del español en la Comunidad escolar" (Tallei, 2016, p. 2), la lengua española pierde espacio dentro de las instituciones educativas brasileñas, ya que la lengua inglesa pasa a ser ofertada de forma obligatoria con la institucionalización de la Ley 13.415<sup>3</sup>.

Con esa obligatoriedad, es retirada la posibilidad de que la comunidad escolar elija cuál Lengua Extranjera (LE) sería enseñada en la matriz curricular de las instituciones, "lo que implica que las escuelas harán un camino contrario a las luchas por una enseñanza plurilíngue" (Tallei, 2016, p. 3), lo que afecta de modo particular a los municipios fronterizos.

Partiendo de esta problemática, la presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar si, en las escuelas estaduais/municipales de línea de frontera entre Paraná y Argentina, hay, de hecho, la implementación de la enseñanza de la lengua española. A partir de la aplicación de cuestionarios dirigidos a las secretarías de educación municipales, buscamos información pertinente a la enseñanza de LE en los municipios de línea de frontera; y por medio de datos obtenidos junto a Seed (Secretaría de Educación y Deporte), trazaremos un panorama de la oferta de la lengua española dentro del estado de Paraná después de la derogación de la Ley 11.161.

## **Fronteras donde las lenguas se cruzan y se entrelazan**

Brasil es un país de gran extensión territorial, siendo el quinto mayor del mundo; su dimensión es considerada continental, lo que lleva a la existencia de grandes espacios de frontera, un total de 15,9 mil kilómetros de longitud, abarcando 588 municipios, según datos IBGE<sup>4</sup>. De los países localizados en

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<sup>2</sup> Ley N° 11.161. Disponible en: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2004-2006/2005/lei/11161.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2004-2006/2005/lei/11161.htm). Acceso en: 17 jun. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Lei N° 13.415. Disponible en: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/13415.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/13415.htm). Acceso en: 17 jun. 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Información extraída del sitio web del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística. Disponible en: <https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-denoticias/releases/24071-ibge-divulga-a-relacao-dos-municipios-na-faixa-de-fronteira>. Acceso en: 24 jul. 2021.

América del Sur, solo Chile y Ecuador no hacen frontera con Brasil; todos los demás hacen frontera terrestre con nuestro país. Según la definición de frontera en la Constitución Federal de Brasil (1988), "franja de frontera" abarca «[...] hasta ciento cincuenta kilómetros de ancho a lo largo de las fronteras terrestres [...] considerada fundamental para la defensa del territorio nacional, y su ocupación y utilización serán reguladas por ley" (Artículo 20, párrafo 2º)<sup>5</sup>. Es de suma importancia enumerar este concepto en la presente investigación, pues, con esta delimitación que está descrita en la Constitución Federal, más municipios serían considerados fronterizos. Sin embargo, nuestro foco de investigación es solamente con los que hacen frontera lineal con Argentina, o sea, municipios en los que constan líneas de demarcaciones territoriales entre Brasil y Argentina y que se encuentran dentro del estado de Paraná.

Los términos frontera y límite son dos conceptos diferentes respecto de un espacio físico también diferente, aunque en la mayoría de los casos están confusos y terminan siendo utilizados como sinónimos. Los límites pueden ser denominados naturales, como ríos o montañas, y artificiales, como muros y carreteras o una línea algunas veces imaginaria. Estos límites definen dónde encierra el espacio territorial de un país y dónde comienza el del otro, es decir, remitiendo a la idea de división. En cuanto a la noción de límite, Ferrari (2014) discurre que la demarcación lineal trata de definir límites, con la colocación de marcos literales que identifican el comienzo y el fin de un espacio dominado por determinada fuerza política, su espacio de control legal; a su vez, la frontera es definitoria del espacio geográfico que divide sistemas estatales distintos.

Todavía con relación a límite, Martin (1997) explica que, actualmente, se reconoce el límite como siendo una línea, y por eso no puede ser habitada; a diferencia de la frontera, que es un espacio habitado donde las personas de los lugares vecinos realizan intercambios. Según Ferrari (2014), a pesar de no ser evidente fuera del mapa, el límite es válido, en la medida en que el marco de frontera simboliza la línea; ya la propia frontera es un área geográfica y, de esa forma, puede desarrollar relaciones que, por consiguiente, superen el límite. En la visión de Albuquerque (2010), las fronteras no se limitan a la demarcación

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<sup>5</sup> "faixa de fronteira" abarca "[...] até cento e cinquenta quilômetros de largura ao longo das fronteiras terrestres [...] considerada fundamental para a defesa do território nacional, e sua ocupação e utilização serão reguladas por lei", (Artigo 20, parágrafo 2º).



de tierras o delimitación de territorios del Estado; ellas representan áreas de pluralidades lingüísticas y culturales. También con relación a la pluralidad de la frontera, Sturza (2006) destaca que, para quien vive en la frontera, existen muchos intercambios entre culturas, etnias, lenguas, naciones que crean significado y trascienden muchas de las cuestiones puramente físicas y geográficas creadas por medio de las herramientas cartográficas.

Para Ferrari (2011), la frontera puede ser considerada como un lugar que refleja no solo división e identidad/alternativa, pues el lugar estará repleto de colores que pueden manifestarse en las más diversas formas de conexión o contacto entre dos identidades culturales oficialmente establecidas, donde ambas identidades culturales se comunican y se integran. Así, a pesar de que la frontera significa la relación espacial que demarca límites entre territorios y posee referencias simbólicas y límites cartográficos justificados con marcos físicos, la frontera también se define por las relaciones reales de sus habitantes. Si la frontera es ese "espacio de contacto", como evidencia Sturza (2006), y de acuerdo con Ferrari (2011), uno de los puntos de ese contacto entre los individuos y quizás el principal es la lengua, pues "el movimiento de personas trae consigo el movimiento de lenguas"<sup>6</sup> (Oliveira & Silva, 2017, p. 133).

Sturza (2006) resalta que en el espacio fronterizo el trato con la lengua es diverso, y se hace presente de dos maneras distintas: una de ellas dentro de su propio idioma materno o dialecto practicado y "sobre las lenguas, cuando toman existencia y sentido, según la perspectiva de quien produce conocimiento sobre las "lenguas en contacto", en las zonas de frontera"<sup>7</sup> (p. 32). Ese trato diferenciado con la lengua puede ser observado principalmente en ciudades muy próximas, en que los idiomas se mezclan, como en ciudades consideradas gemelas. En el estado de Paraná, existen cuatro municipios considerados ciudades gemelas, descritas por Ferrari (2011) como "pares o tríos de ciudades instituidas en la confluencia del límite entre dos o más países y que se caracterizan por interacciones transfronterizas"<sup>8</sup> (p. 136). Relatamos primeramente la más conocida, o sea, Foz do Iguaçu, que hace frontera con la ciudad argentina de Puerto Iguazú, y la paraguaya Ciudad del Este.

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<sup>6</sup> "o movimento de pessoas traz consigo o movimento de línguas"

<sup>7</sup> "sobre as línguas, quando tomam existência e sentido, segundo a perspectiva de quem produz conhecimento sobre as "línguas em contato", nas zonas de fronteira"

<sup>8</sup> "pares ou tríos de cidades instituídas na confluência do limite entre dois ou mais países e que se caracterizam por interações transfronteiriças"

Otro municipio paranaense menor, sin embargo, con la misma situación de triple frontera, es Barracão. Localizado en el suroeste del estado de Paraná, el municipio hace frontera seca con la ciudad de Dionísio Cerqueira (SC), y Bernardo de Irigoyen (MNES), y están divididos por límites internacionales y estatales. Según Días y Ferrari (2011), las tres ciudades forman una verdadera conurbación, es decir, las ciudades se han desarrollado formando un conjunto. Aunque regidas y administradas por municipios, estados y países diferentes, la población interactúa cotidianamente, por el uso y la apropiación del espacio territorial.

Con respecto a las tres fronteras, Ferrari (2011) añade que estos centros urbanos tienen numerosas similitudes que los hacen difíciles de distinguir entre sí, por ejemplo, a la vista de un satélite. De ese modo, a pesar de la existencia de marcos abstractos creados por el hombre para esa diferenciación, como las fronteras, para personas de fuera o incluso residentes de esos centros es un tanto difícil absorber las demarcaciones que expresan tales territorialidades.

Muy cerca de la ciudad de Barracão, a unos nueve kilómetros se encuentra Bom Jesus do Sul, que también hace frontera seca con Bernardo de Irigoyen. Los dos municipios paranaenses hacen acceso a la ciudad argentina, a través de una Aduana, que se encuentra en la frontera entre Dionísio Cerqueira y Bernardo de Irigoyen. También con características de ciudades gemelas es Santo Antônio do Sudoeste (PR) / San Antonio (MNES). Con relación al espacio fronterizo de las ciudades arriba citadas, Ferrari (2011) destaca que, además de ser única en el sentido de fácil acceso entre países, también en ella hay la única travesía por tierra entre Brasil y Argentina, no existiendo marcos físicos naturales que distinguen el límite entre un país y otro. Además, en esa localidad hay ciudades gemelas conturbadas, y ese hecho diferencia aún más esa zona, ya que no se encuentra el mismo fenómeno en otras zonas fronterizas entre Brasil y Argentina.

Los municipios de Foz do Iguaçu, Barracão y Santo Antônio do Sudoeste son, según Ferrari (2011), "ciudades fronterizas que favorecen ese compartir y numerosas interacciones, pues no hay cómo huir: las propias redes urbanas conurbadas, imponen el contacto diario entre los fronterizos" (p. 138)<sup>9</sup>.

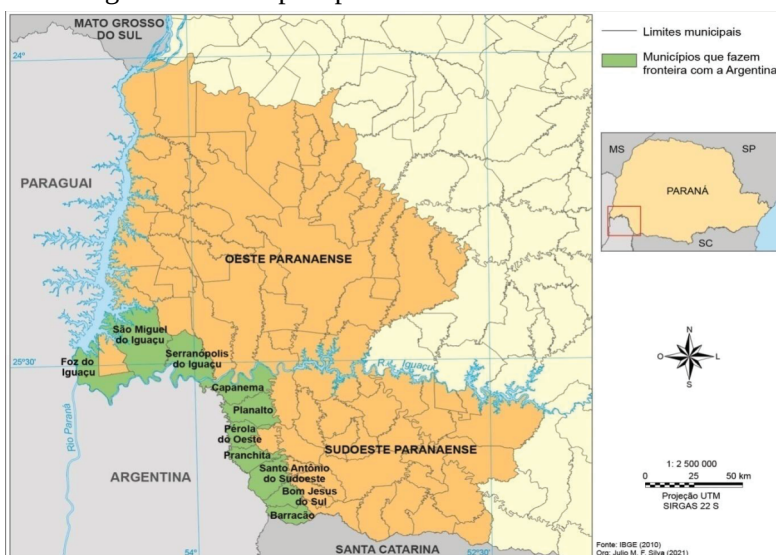
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<sup>9</sup> "cidades fronteiriças que favorecem esse compartilhamento e numerosas interações, pois não há como fugir: as próprias malhas urbanas conurbadas, impõem o contato diário entre os fronteiriços"

No sólo cuestiones económicas, sino simbólicas, culturales e identitarias forman parte de las interacciones transfronterizas, siendo tan desarrolladas como las económicas y debidamente relacionadas con éstas. En ese sentido, todo se conecta debido a la naturaleza de las interacciones que los sujetos fronterizos establecen, en una dinámica multidisciplinaria que involucra ambos lados de la frontera, agrega Ferrari (2011).

A diferencia de las ciudades gemelas conurbadas, pero también clasificada como gemela es Capanema. El municipio limita con Andresito (MNES), y se conectan a través de un puente construido sobre el río Santo Antônio, en 1993. Según Ferrari (2011), Andresito y Capanema se constituyen en el más joven par de ciudades gemelas de ese segmento fronterizo brasileño-argentino del conjunto del extremo oeste de Santa Catarina, suroeste de Paraná y noreste de Misiones. Distintos de las ciudades gemelas antes citadas, pero también fronterizos, se encuentran los otros cinco municipios paranaenses presentados aquí, por orden de proximidad: Pranchita, Perola do Oeste y Planalto, localizados a suroeste del estado de Paraná, y que bordean el municipio de Andresito a través del río Santo Antônio, que es un afluente del río Iguaçu. Los municipios de Serranópolis do Iguaçu y São Miguel do Iguaçu se encuentran localizados en el extremo oeste paranaense, y hacen frontera con el municipio de Andresito a través del río Iguaçu.

Figura 1. Municipios paranaenses de línea de frontera



Fuente: IBGE (2010). Org: Julio M. F. Silva (2021)

Por lo que se refiere a los espacios fronterizos, Ferrari (2011) señala que, las líneas fronterizas no son sólo marcas de separación entre dos naciones, sino que las líneas fronterizas son más complejas y tienen su conjunto socioterritorial características propias, repleto de interacciones materiales e inmateriales entre los fronterizos y no solo entre brasileños y argentinos. De esta manera, debe ser considerada en su completa unidad multiforme por los Estados nacionales. Considerando estas características geográficas y sociales de relación diaria y tránsito de personas de una ciudad a otra, de un país a otro, y consecuentemente de las alteraciones de idiomas del portugués al español y viceversa, sería imprescindible una política lingüística diferenciada para estas localidades por parte de las instituciones gubernamentales. Sturza (2006) subraya que "la confrontación entre las lenguas y la consiguiente mezcla entre ellas las hacen más visibles. Ocupan diferentes lugares y sentidos para los hablantes fronterizos"<sup>10</sup> (p. 56). Lo expuesto por la autora evidencia la necesidad de la elaboración de políticas públicas dirigidas a las regiones fronterizas, y principalmente las con foco en la enseñanza de lenguas, señalando que la lengua del estado no siempre es la lengua del pueblo.

Con el paso de los años, el cuadro de la enseñanza de lenguas en Brasil fue siendo alterado, a lo largo de muchas prácticas, modificaciones legislativas y metodológicas en la tentativa de alcanzar el plurilingüismo en nuestras escuelas. Sin embargo, lo que observamos es siempre la supremacía de una lengua respecto a las otras, sobre todo en el estado de Paraná. A mediados de 1980, la redemocratización del país era el escenario propicio para que los profesores, organizados en asociaciones, liderasen un amplio movimiento por el retorno de la pluralidad de oferta de Lengua Extranjera en las escuelas públicas. Como resultado de tales movilizaciones, la Secretaría de Estado de Educación creó, oficialmente, los Centros de Lenguas Extranjeras Modernas (CELEM), el 15 de agosto de 1986, como forma de valorizar el plurilingüismo y la diversidad étnica que marca la historia paranaense (Paraná, 2008).

El CELEM es un excelente programa orientado a la enseñanza de LE, sin embargo, los espacios fronterizos no pueden resumir la enseñanza de lengua, en específico la española en las regiones mencionadas arriba solo en

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<sup>10</sup> "O confronto entre as línguas e a consequente mistura entre elas as tornam mais visíveis. Elas ocupam lugares e sentidos diferentes para os falantes fronteiriços".

esos centros de enseñanza, son necesarias políticas públicas específicas para esos lugares, pues, como describe Ferrari (2011), el espacio fronterizo no es solo la representación de la delimitación política y territorial entre identidades nacionales, tampoco se reduce a espacios de conflictos; "ella es también lugar de encuentros, de intercambios, de comunicación y contactos sociales que promueven la mezcla entre individuos portadores de múltiples identidades, un lugar del saber hacer y del saber vivir en conjunto"<sup>11</sup> (p. 133).

### **Procedimientos metodológicos**

La presente investigación posee características multimetodológicas, insertada en la perspectiva descriptiva, con técnicas de recolección de datos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Según Gil (1999), hay numerosos estudios que se pueden clasificar en esta categoría. Y una de las características más importantes es el uso de técnicos estandarizados de recolección de datos. Con relación a la técnica de recolección de datos, André (2002) sostiene que destinaría los términos cuantitativos y cualitativos para distinguir las técnicas de recolección, o mejor, para especificar el tipo de datos a ser obtenidos, y utilizará nombres más precisos para identificar el tipo de investigación a ser realizada, como por ejemplo, histórica, descriptiva, participante, fenomenológica.

Con relación a la utilización de métodos mixtos, buscamos apoyo en Creswell y Clark (2013), que analizaron durante mucho tiempo la utilización de este tipo de metodología en artículos. Los autores resaltan que la combinación de los métodos evidencia más el estudio de un problema en la investigación, que utilizar la investigación cuantitativa o cualitativa de forma aislada, sin que el investigador quede preso a un solo tipo de recolección de datos.

Una de las características de la investigación descriptiva es la técnica de recolección de datos estandarizada, como los cuestionarios, Gil (1999) enumera las siguientes ventajas en la utilización de cuestionarios: asegura su valor como herramienta de investigación, en la medida en que es capaz de abarcar una gran audiencia, aunque esté contenida en localidades distintas y lejanas, ya que puede ser enviado por correspondencia. También se muestra

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<sup>11</sup> "ela é também lugar de encontros, de trocas, de comunicação e contatos sociais que promovem a mescla entre indivíduos portadores de múltiplas identidades, um lugar do saber fazer e do saber viver em conjunto".

ventajoso visto que no requiere entrenamiento de los investigadores, implicando menos gastos; protege la identidad de los entrevistados, garantizando anonimato y que los investigadores no sean influenciados por las circunstancias individuales de los participantes; y es posible responderlo en el momento que sea más conveniente.

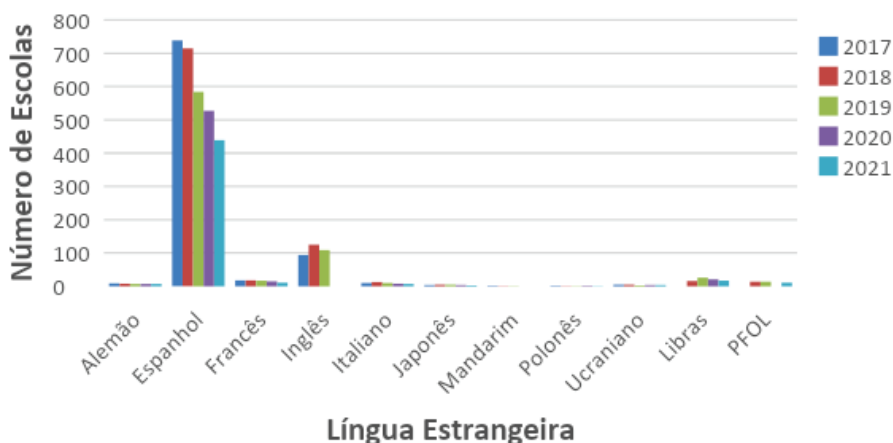
Por tratarse de un recorte de una disertación de maestría, optamos por discurrir en el presente artículo, solamente los datos de cuño cuantitativo. La información fue obtenida a través de cuestionarios enviados por correo electrónico a Seed y también a las Secretarías de Educación municipales de las ciudades fronterizas.

A través de los datos, conseguimos cuantificar el número total de las escuelas estatales de Paraná que impartieron clases de español dentro de los CELEMs en los últimos cinco años, o sea, de 2017 hasta 2021. La cuestión de análisis numérico también ocurrió con los diez municipios fronterizos foco de este trabajo: Barracão, Bom Jesus do Sul, Capanema, Foz do Iguaçu, Perola do Oeste, Planalto, Pranchita, São Miguel do Iguaçu, Santo Antônio do Sudoeste y Serranópolis do Iguaçu, permitiendo así, identificar cuántos de estos municipios, ofrecen la enseñanza de español en sus escuelas.

## Análisis y discusión de los datos

El gráfico a continuación muestra todas las LEs que son ofrecidas por medio del CELEM dentro del estado paranaense, entre los años de 2017 y 2021. Señalamos que la matrícula es facultativa para los alumnos y ofrecida en contra turno dentro de las instituciones de enseñanza.

Gráfico 1– Oferta de LE dentro del CELEM



Fuente: elaboración propia

De las 2.133 escuelas estatales que el Estado de Paraná dispone, solamente en 883 de ellas el CELEM estaba presente en el año 2017. Vale destacar que ese mismo año, las escuelas ya habían elegido las LEs que serían enseñadas dentro de sus rejillas curriculares, antes de que se aprobara la Ley 13.415. Podemos observar que el idioma inglés todavía formaba parte de la oferta dentro de los centros de enseñanza, y con un número que ocupa la segunda posición de las lenguas ofertadas. Asumimos que el español ocupó el lugar de la lengua inglesa dentro de la matriz curricular de esas instituciones. La citada ley determina la oferta del inglés de forma obligatoria, pero no prohíbe la oferta de esta lengua también por medio del CELEM, sin embargo, no es usual que una institución ofrezca la misma lengua extranjera en carácter optativo.

Con relación a la oferta del español, la lengua ocupa una destacada posición; de los 883 CELEMs, 739 enseñan dicha lengua, resultado de la Ley

11.161, que aún se hacía presente. Incluso con el Ministerio de Educación recomendando que fuera de preferencia el español la lengua que las instituciones brasileñas ofertasen de forma optativa, fue con la implementación de la citada ley que el español ganó espacio, aunque éste no fuera el deseado, es decir, ofrecido como disciplina obligatoria y no como optativa.

En el año 2018, hay un total de 920 instituciones educativas que ofrecen LE dentro de los CELEMs, 37 clases más con respecto a 2017. El idioma inglés tuvo un pequeño aumento de su oferta, y el español, un pequeño declive. ¿Estaría el español ocupando aún el espacio de la lengua inglesa dentro de la matriz curricular? O con la derogación de la Ley 11.161, el declive de la lengua ya había comenzado. Podemos notar que hubo un gran aumento en la apertura de clases con LEs distintas, como fue el caso de LIBRAS (Lengua Brasileña de Signos) y PFOL (Portugués para Hablantes de Otras Lenguas).

En el año 2019, el número de instituciones de enseñanza que ofrecen los CELEMs también disminuye; con relación a 2018, fueron 143 escuelas que cerraron sus actividades dentro de los centros de lenguas extranjeras, totalizando solo 777 instituciones con centros de lenguas extranjeras activos. La caída de clases de español también es muy significativa. Si se compara al año 2018, 130 clases de español dejaron de existir. Asumimos que éstas no fueron para dentro de la matriz curricular, pues ya hacía dos años de la implementación de la Ley 13.415. También aumentan las clases de libras y disminuyen las de inglés.

En 2020, las clases activas de CELEMs continúan disminuyendo, 189 escuelas menos en comparación con 2019, un total de 588 instituciones con centros abiertos. Caída también en las clases de lengua española, 57 instituciones de enseñanza dejan de ofertar la lengua en 2020. Ninguna institución paranaense ha abierto clases de lengua inglesa. Deducimos que las instituciones ya se habían adaptado al propuesto en la Ley 13.415, o sea, oferta del inglés a partir del sexto año y en la Enseñanza Media. También en el año 2020, la educación dentro del territorio nacional e internacional sufre cambios drásticos, debido a la pandemia de Corona Virus Disease (COVID). Según la United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), más de 1,5 mil millones de estudiantes han sido o todavía están siendo perjudicados debido al cierre de las instituciones educativas en todo el mundo.

El 17 de marzo de 2020, con la Ordenanza n° 343, el Ministro de Estado



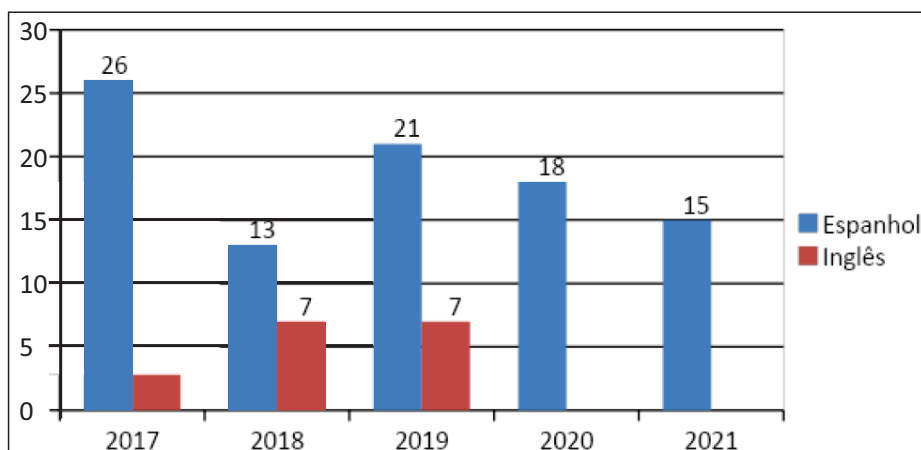
de Educación, Abraham Weintraub, "Dispone sobre la sustitución de las clases presenciales por clases en medios digitales mientras dure la situación de pandemia del Nuevo Corona virus - COVID-19"<sup>12</sup> (Brasil, 2020). En el estado de Paraná, la Seed pública la Resolución n° 1.016, de 3 de abril de 2020, que "Establece en régimen especial las actividades escolares en forma de clases no presenciales, a raíz de la pandemia causada por el COVID-19" (Paraná, 2020).

Frente a este escenario, las clases presenciales dan espacio a la enseñanza a distancia. Las escuelas tuvieron que adaptarse a esta nueva realidad, en la que las plataformas de enseñanza en línea fueron las herramientas utilizadas, una nueva forma de enseñar, en la que profesores y alumnos aprendieron de forma simultánea a utilizarlas.

En 2021, el escenario continúa el mismo; el año escolar comenzó el 18 de febrero, aún de forma remota. Dentro de los CELEMs, observamos caída en el número de clases, en comparación con el año 2020; solo 500 escuelas con centro de idiomas activos, 88 instituciones menos del año anterior.

Coincidentemente fueron 88 instituciones que dejaron de ofrecer la lengua española en 2021.

Gráfico 2 - Oferta de LE dentro del CELEM de las escuelas estatales de frontera

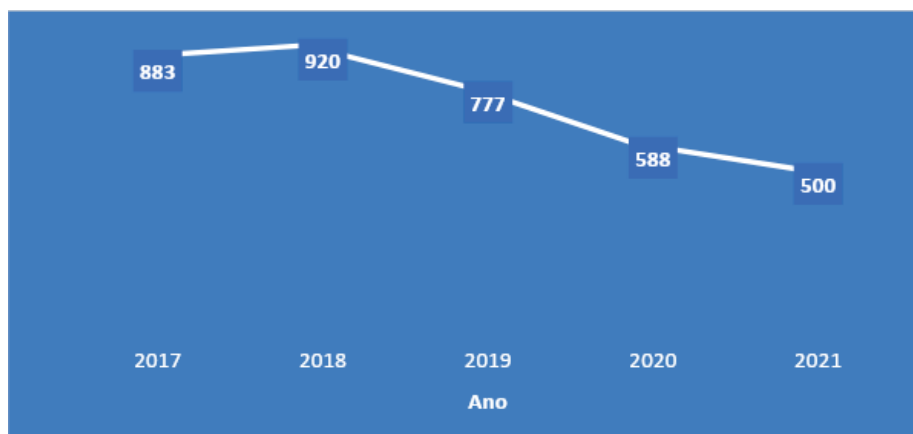


Fuente: elaboración propia

<sup>12</sup> "Dispõe sobre a substituição das aulas presenciais por aulas em meios digitais enquanto durar a situação de pandemia do Novo Corona vírus - COVID-19"

El gráfico arriba presenta un panorama de la oferta de la lengua española y de la lengua inglesa dentro del CELEM de las escuelas estatales de los municipios fronterizos, objeto de nuestra investigación. Los diez municipios analizados suman 81 instituciones educativas estatales.

Gráfico 3 - Escuelas con clases activas de CELEM



Fuente: elaboración propia

El gráfico anterior muestra la disminución en el número de escuelas del estado de Paraná que ofrecen enseñanza de alguna LE dentro del CELEM. Señalamos que el estado posee 2.133 instituciones de enseñanza, y que en los últimos cinco años el número de escuelas con CELEMs activos no llegó a alcanzar ni 50%. Actualmente, el número no llega a  $\frac{1}{4}$  del total de las escuelas del estado que oportunizan el aprendizaje de LE en período extraescolar para la comunidad.

A diferencia de las instituciones de enseñanza estatales, que son amparadas por leyes o normativas para la enseñanza de LE, como es el caso de la Ley 13.415, que determinó la obligatoriedad de la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa, las instituciones municipales de enseñanza poseen peculiaridades políticas que varían de un municipio para el otro, debido a la no obligatoriedad de la enseñanza de lenguas dentro de la Enseñanza Primaria I, o sea, grupo de edad de enseñanza en que la responsabilidad es de los ayuntamientos.

Aunque no existe la obligatoriedad de la enseñanza de LE dentro de las escuelas municipales, la Ley de directrices y bases de la educación nacional

menciona, en su artículo 24, que "podrán organizarse clases, o grupos, con alumnos de distintas series, con niveles equivalentes de adelanto en la materia, para la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, artes, u otros componentes curriculares"<sup>13</sup> (Brasil, 1996). La Resolución N° 7, de 14 de diciembre de 2010, que Fija Directrices Curriculares Nacionales para la Enseñanza Fundamental de 9 (nueve) años, presenta, en su Art. 31, § 1º: "En las escuelas que opten por incluir Lengua Extranjera en los años iniciales de la Enseñanza Fundamental, el profesor deberá tener licenciatura específica en el componente curricular"<sup>14</sup> (Brasil, 2010). A pesar de los documentos arriba citados resaltan la no obligatoriedad de la enseñanza LE para la Enseñanza Fundamental I, algunas instituciones de enseñanza de este grupo de edad optan por la oferta de la disciplina.

Tabla 1 - Oferta de LE dentro de las escuelas municipales de frontera 2020/2021

CIUDADES	Nº DE ESCUELAS	2020		2021	
		ESPAÑOL	INGLÉS	ESPAÑOL	INGLÉS
Barracão	10	Sin datos	Sin datos		X
Bom Jesus do Sul	01	X	X	X	X
Capanema	09		X		X
Foz do Iguaçu	50				
Planalto	06		X	Sin datos	Sin datos
Pérola do Oeste	05				
Pranchita	04		X	Sin datos	Sin datos
Santo Antônio do Sudoeste	11	X	X		X
São Miguel do Iguaçu	13				
Serranópolis do Iguaçu	01				

Fuente: elaboración propia

La tabla arriba enumera los diez municipios paranaenses que hacen línea de frontera con Argentina, junto con la cantidad de escuelas municipales que lo poseen. Están señalizados con una X los municipios que ofrecieron en

<sup>13</sup> “poderão organizar-se classes, ou turmas, com alunos de séries distintas, com níveis equivalentes de adiantamento na matéria, para o ensino de línguas estrangeiras, artes, ou outros componentes curriculares”

<sup>14</sup> “Nas escolas que optarem por incluir Língua Estrangeira nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental, o professor deverá ter licenciatura específica no componente curricular”

2020 la enseñanza de español y/o inglés en sus escuelas. Lo mismo ocurre para el año 2021.

### **Consideraciones finales**

De forma general, nuestro intento era analizar si en las escuelas estadales/municipales de línea de frontera entre Paraná y Argentina hay, de hecho, la implementación de la enseñanza de la lengua española, y cuál es la posición ocupada por esta lengua dentro de las instituciones educativas estatales de Paraná después de la derogación de la Ley 11.161. Con relación a la oferta de la lengua española dentro de los CELEMs en los últimos cinco años, observamos una disminución progresiva en el número de escuelas con clases activas ofertando dicha lengua. El mismo cuadro es observado en los CELEMs de las escuelas estatales de los municipios de línea de frontera, objeto principal de nuestra investigación. Presumimos que ese panorama es el resultado de implementación de políticas públicas restrictivas, como es el caso de la Ley 13.415, que impone de forma obligatoria la enseñanza de inglés en la matriz curricular. En suma, después de la derogación de la Ley 11.161, el español viene perdiendo espacio dentro de las escuelas estatales paranaenses.

Con relación a la oferta del español en las instituciones de enseñanza municipales de línea de frontera, observamos que dicha lengua se ofrece en las instituciones de enseñanza de tiempo completo, sin embargo, era también compartida con la oferta de la lengua inglesa. En los otros municipios que ofrecen la lengua inglesa en detrimento de la española, lo hacen bajo varias justificaciones, entre ellas, para que la enseñanza de la lengua continuara en la Enseñanza Fundamental II, ya que era impuesta de manera obligatoria, la falta de profesores en el cuadro de funcionarios, opción de la comunidad por la referida lengua. Sin embargo, lo que prevalece es el discurso de la universalidad del inglés, principal idioma de la sociedad contemporánea, la lengua más hablada del mundo, por ser una lengua de comunicación mundial. En estos municipios, la lógica de organización y su funcionamiento social difieren de las demás ciudades no fronterizas, y por eso necesitan políticas públicas diferenciadas, sin embargo, el contexto de municipio de frontera no es tenido en cuenta para elegir la LE enseñada. En las regiones fronterizas, la lengua española, muy lejos de ser una lengua extranjera, podría formar parte de un proyecto de enseñanza bilingüe.

Con la realización de esta investigación fue posible averiguar que, siendo la lengua española el idioma oficial de todos los países que se aproximan a Brasil, y por muchas otras razones, es innegable la importancia de ese idioma como fenómeno de integración. El cuadro en que Brasil se encuentra actualmente en relación a los otros países de América del Sur, con el estrechamiento de las relaciones, comerciales y eventualmente políticas y sociales, trae para la discusión la cuestión de la importancia de la lengua española en el escenario educacional brasileño, y cuán relevante se presenta tal aprendizaje.

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## CAPÍTULO 6

Exploring English language education worldwide throughout a pandemic:  
The need for an Integrable Pedagogy

Lilia Sulema Bórquez Morales

[lilia\\_borquez@uaeh.edu.mx](mailto:lilia_borquez@uaeh.edu.mx)

Abigail Carretero Hernandez

[abigail\\_carretero@uaeh.edu.mx](mailto:abigail_carretero@uaeh.edu.mx)

Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado

[martha\\_hernandez5011@uaeh.edu.mx](mailto:martha_hernandez5011@uaeh.edu.mx)

Tomás Hernández Ángeles

[profe\\_3470@uaeh.edu.mx](mailto:profe_3470@uaeh.edu.mx)

Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes, up to now, the worst education crisis in history. The pandemic resulted in an unprecedented global disruption to education. Most, if not all, educational institutions were caught off guard by the emergence of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). According to World Bank (2021 a, b), school closures began in February 2020 in countries including Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, Iran, Iraq, China, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Vietnam. By 14 April 2020, in 199 countries, all school levels, including higher education institutions, as part of the strategies to battle the pandemic, had closed due to the pandemic affecting more than 1.6 billion students (World Bank, 2021a, 2021b).

As we navigate what is next, we need to think about what we have gained, what changes have occurred; changes that were already happening, but the pandemic made them take place a lot faster. Administrators and teachers are at a point where it is necessary to take a moment to reflect on where we are going with learning. We have the opportunity to rethink our learning experiences and leverage what we have gained. Different countries need context-sensitive responses to ensure students get the high-quality education they need for their future. It is essential to assume that the crisis in education caused by COVID-19

is not over, as ongoing school closures will continue to lead to lost learning caused by time out of school and learning regression (Page et al., 2021). The pandemic has left us with a broad and long-lasting effect.

This research analyses the challenges and opportunities created by this pandemic. It focuses on issues of COVID-19 on language teaching in higher education institutions. Thus, in this paper, which is part of a larger project with surveys and interviews, we examine educators' experiences of English language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study's findings contribute to the field of education through teaching experiences gained from in-service teachers and samples of high school and university teachers in different countries. It identifies the challenges of teaching and learning during the pandemic and strategies to thrive in post-pandemic teaching. For this, the study addresses the following research questions: What challenges were endured across continents? What can be integrated into language education after experiencing a pandemic?

## **Literature Review**

The literature review suggests that the whole world is concerned with what may come of education once the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed us to leave isolation. A series of works have been published over the last two years. Fayed and Cummings (2022) gathered experiences from people all over the world and looked at teaching during the time of crisis, alternative course delivery, some innovative teaching and assessment paradigms, and the notion of supporting mental health in times of anxiety. This work exposed the need to build resilient systems and explained that there have been some areas of innovation and development, such as the inclusion of technology in the different teaching modalities. However, it also stressed the need for policymakers and educators to rethink curricula, instructional strategies, and assessment. While the worldwide exploration of Fayed and Cummings (2022) is instrumental in learning about each theme, it is clear that because all the chapters are written by people in different parts of the world, each chapter is influenced by its context.

Ammigan et al. (2020) look at the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on internationalization, financial ramifications, the privatization of higher



education, global collaboration, and the students' well-being in different parts of the world with an emphasis on the United States and Canada. The authors discussed a positive impact on the use of technology but emphasised the need for ethical development in the area that promotes collaboration across cultures. Similarly, the work by Thi et al., (2020) highlights the interconnectedness among nations and emphasises that universities should be more involved with social responsibilities.

The work of Mavridi (2022) had more than a thousand teachers from 16 countries answer a survey that gathered teachers' impressions on technologies used, Internet and equipment usage, ongoing institutional support, as well as teachers' perceptions, experiences, and needs. The work shows that across those countries, more than 40% of all students had very poor access to electronic devices and Internet connections during the pandemic. More than 70% of teachers declared not to have the necessary support, and the ones who declared to have such support indicated it to be mainly related to their materials and online training. In this survey, more than 60% of teachers indicated they need more training for specific teaching approaches. The work shows that the change of interaction impacted the students' engagement; however, the study did not gather the teachers' experiences and reactions to these changes.

The lessons the COVID-19 pandemic has offered can be the basis for the pedagogical decisions that take education forward. The pandemic pointed to a necessary change in the teaching practice (Duncan, 2021) so that we meet students' specific needs (Long, 2021). There is a need for a change that responds to the students' demands and in the way institutions structure pre-service teacher training (Kaur, 2020). Pashler et al. (2008) had already identified that the different performances in education were determined by the context and influenced by the social situation. More than 10 years later, the pandemic again showed the relevance of context (Long, 2021; Smith et al., 2021), social equity (Fayed & Cummings, 2022), and the need for a community of practice in education. Other research studies around the world identified that remote teaching contributed to higher anxiety among EFL teachers (Akban & Dikilitaş, 2022). This may be because social presence, the degree to which any person feels connected in an online environment (Khoshnevisan, 2021), decreased because of many socio-economic and pedagogical factors. Such a connection was found to be essential to the emergence of an educational

approach in which technology-enabled education is in need to include culture-binding connectedness (Umachandran & Syamsuddin, 2021). Researchers such as Drinkwater (2021), Kaur (2020), and Smith et al. (2021) state that people coming together around mutual engagement to support each other is a crucial aspect of a sustainable community of practice.

As the world moved into Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) (Affouneh et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020), the pandemic evidenced major technological inequities (Greenhow, 2022) and social exclusions (Szelényi, 2022). Buckley et al. (2020) advocate for education with “equal participation of all groups in society” (p. 74). Some higher education institutions began that change by implementing professional development that included self-teaching, peer mentoring, and collaborative course design (Bailey et al., 2021). Others focused on social justice advocacy and building partnerships with stakeholders and community programs (Waly, 2021).

When in March 2020, schools were closed, and institutions went online, it quickly became evident that neither educators nor students were prepared (Drinkwater, 2021). There was a lack of investment in adequate technology and pedagogy (Mavridi, 2022); many people in academia struggled to accept the change in teaching modality (Duncan, 2021). The emotional and psychological needs of learners were not being taken into account, and student engagement became a challenge for many educators (Kaur, 2020). To address such issues in education, we need to make education listen to the voices of students (Parson & Ozaki, 2020) and implement different frameworks. Buckley et al. (2020) proposed a framework that suggested incorporating complex content, using activities to foster learning across differences, and fostering openness to content and student diversity. Drinkwater (2021) proposes a pedagogy with a “non-hierarchical relationship between students and teachers [that] connects learning to students’ lived experiences [and includes] critical inquiry and reflection [as well as promoting] robust dialogue” (p. 87). Fayed and Cummings (2022) declare that we need educational institutions to create spaces to acquire values and skills but also critical thinking, democratic values, and sensitivity to work for the common good. Taking those frameworks proposed by the different researchers is a must, as the pandemic has given us the opportunity. In the past, it has been stated that differences in students’ success are not only due to biological or genetic factors,

but the context and social elements carry considerable weight as well (Pashler et al., 2008).

Parson and Ozaki (2020) propose an engaged pedagogy with a focus on the well-being of the learners and teachers, where teachers become facilitators. Following on the proposed work of Kumaravadivelu (2006), which recognized the pedagogy of possibility and the importance of context; future educators need to "consider the context in which their course is situated to further inform the dialogue between pedagogy and technology" (Drinkwater, 2021, p. 88). The criteria for the effective teacher are changing, and besides the digital transformation, students can be seen as partners. Educators can move away from solo teaching, at the time that we must prepare with pedagogies for an unknown future (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2022).

## **Methodology**

The data for this paper were collected from semi-structured interviews. Since the purpose of the study was to gather information from teachers in higher education that would paint a picture of the educational process during and right after the pandemic, convenience sampling (Mackey & Gass, 2005) was used to reach out to as many teachers around the world as possible. For a couple of months, emails and messages were sent to the four continents. In the end, 20 participants involved with language teaching from The United States (US), Mexico (MX), Costa Rica (CR), El Salvador (SV), The United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland (CH), Austria (AT), Thailand (TH), Vietnam (VN), China (CN), and Algeria (DZ) responded to the call and were interviewed.

Once a response was obtained from the participants, the interviews were scheduled from the 31st of January to the 22nd of February 2022. The interviews were conducted online using Zoom and Meet according to the interviewees' preference and their possibilities according to their country. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview guide included gathering demographic information in the opening questions; participants were asked to share their nationality, current location, and general information. The key questions in the interview invited the participants to narrate their experiences dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. When necessary, they were promoted to share their biggest challenges and the

decisions they made at the moment to deal with such experiences. The final section of the interview prompted the participants to share their expectations for the future as well as their ideas on the role's institutions, teachers, and teacher educators should have when moving towards a post-pandemic education.

The interviews were all conducted only by one interviewer as the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee plays such an important role (Ryan et al., 2009), and the exploration intended to provide the same opportunity to express ideas, feelings, and beliefs in the same way to all participants.

However, once the interviews were transcribed, the team met to discuss the project's progress and the way forward. In this first meeting, it was decided to focus this paper only on the exploration of higher education; therefore, five participants who were either working in basic education, only in administrative positions, or teaching in language centers were removed from the analysis. Thus, in this paper, the experiences of 15 teachers and teacher educators were included.

Each researcher in the team was assigned one participant's transcribed interview, and the first step was to identify general themes. A second meeting took place where each researcher shared and explained the themes found in their participant's interview. They revised and discussed themes to verify that the coding made sense.

Data were transcribed and analysed inductively using thematic analysis (Miles et al., 2014). During the thematic analysis conducted in this research, the aim was not to impose patterns but to identify themes of meaning in the experiences shared by teachers and teacher educators around the world (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The manual coding of the transcriptions allowed for a deeper engagement with the data than when coded with software.

This qualitative content analysis allowed identifying common codes, which were identified and merged to have 6 final categories: challenges of online learning, challenges of online teaching<sup>1</sup>, institutional support, a community of practice, autonomy in language teaching and learning, and gained learning while and post teaching. After reaching an agreement on

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<sup>1</sup> Making a difference on the agency expressed in the accounts

the categories, each researcher was assigned two more participants' transcriptions to conduct the coding according to the now-established categories. The meetings were done face-to-face, but the work was done asynchronously using shared documents to which all researchers had access.

Once all the transcriptions were analysed, each researcher entered each excerpt in a table for each category. The next step was to revise each excerpt and identify a subtheme and connotation. While some accounts describing the experience of living the pandemic were negative and fatalist, others were quite positive and hopeful. Therefore, the analysis started to consider not only the appearance of the code/theme, but also the connotation or the attitude identified, which in this study is understood as the positive or negative response to a specific input (Finch, 2012), in this case, teaching during a pandemic.

The categories identified in the participants' accounts frame the presentation of the findings. The discussion of each category provides a rounded explanation of the data and their relationship to the literature. Their contextualisation is presented in the following section.

## Findings

A little over two years ago, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about challenges in education that are still unfolding and which have created the need for a different pedagogy (Baker et al., 2022). We need to change education by leaving behind the traditional role of teachers being just transmitters of knowledge (Kaur, 2020) and aiming for a more inclusive, engaged, and sensitive pedagogy (Baker et al., 2022) which recognizes that schools are not only a space (Long, 2021), but a learning community. The literature published in recent years and reviewed in the literature section stresses the need to understand our current situation and future needs in education. In a moment when we need to locally identify what has been done so that we can globally suggest what needs to be integrated into language education, this paper offers an in-depth recollection of experiences from teachers in higher education located on four continents.

The participants' experiences were recorded, transcribed, coded, and organized into major themes. This section presents the tendency found in each theme exemplified by some excerpts from the participants. We must emphasize

that the findings reported in this section are found across participants worldwide, making such findings relevant to a diversity of contexts.

### Challenges of online teaching

It is undeniable that the change in teaching modality brought about challenges for teachers worldwide. One theme shared by our participants is the lack of knowledge to include technology in their teaching, using technological devices to reach the students, and adapting materials or teaching methodology to a new reality (Mavridi, 2022). One of the great challenges reported by our participants was the lack of interaction with students; Maxwell (TH) mentioned that in online interaction, the students don't want to put on the camera or the microphone. This challenge was also shared by Luis (CN), who emphasized that this lack of interaction was demotivating:

*I don't feel the interaction, the communication between me and my students, yeah, ... I'm speaking, I'm like facing the computer. I feel lonely...*

This challenge was also faced by Frank (MX), who had to use his computer and his Internet connection at home, which sometimes was not good and affected his interaction: if the connection is not good, "how can you develop the same interaction with the students?" (Frank, MX). The negative effects of this kind of interaction have been discussed by Akbana and Dikilitaş (2022); while in many places the use of virtual platforms allowed to maintain communication with students, teachers were forced to experience a different interaction, resulting many times in a lack of social presence (Khoshnevisa, 2021) which was not beneficial in the study of a language.

Following Frank's comment, another similarity found was equipment necessities. Most of the teachers mentioned that they had to use their equipment. It seems that very few institutions provided their teachers with the necessary equipment to work during the pandemic, as the case of Maxwell's (TH) school which provided tablets for their students, or the public university where Victoria (MX) works, which allowed their teachers to take home desktops from their computer labs. These data seem to echo the findings of

Mavridi (2022) with teachers from 16 countries, where teachers without support from their situations were the most common situation.

Something worth noticing is that having interviewed teachers provided a more in-depth view of how they saw these challenges. In the cases where teachers were supported in the process, some challenges were identified to have a somewhat positive connotation. For instance, teachers talking about adapting programs (Victoria, MX) with the help of colleagues or adapting to the new normality with freedom:

*I think that, like with many other institutions, we were not ready for this situation, and I think our institution adapted to what was at hand, (...) we had the students do different activities, but all of us had the freedom to do whatever we thought was best (Hellen, MX).*

Challenges of online learning As mentioned in the methodology section, while the teaching and learning process is mostly a joined dichotomy, we decided to separate the challenges found according to the agency most visible in the participants' accounts in this study. In the case of online learning challenges, we identified what was perceived by the teachers to be difficult for the students. Most teachers shared that their students had Internet issues or they lacked devices during the pandemic:

*We couldn't access it, I don't have Internet in my—the whole residence, I don't have that, I don't have a mobile phone, I don't have a laptop, how can I do the online learning? (Mirna, DZ) not all the students have this smartphone or iPad and you know, some of them working on listening remotely in rural areas where Internet connection is very very bad and there is lots of cut of (Maxwell, TH), students cannot get a stable Internet connection, they can't log to their LMS... [and] it could be very difficult for all students to be able to available to Zoom. (Paty, VN)*

Mexico was not the exception; Portia commented, “there was no access to technology for some people, and still people have to adapt”, Frank shared

that some of his students had to find Internet cafes to connect to classes. Students in Europe experienced similar challenges;

*A lot of them don't have the socioeconomic situation that we might expect them to have or some universities have. So, some of them didn't have good Internet and computers and didn't have the home situation to be able to do that [be connected to classes]. (Neil, UK)*

The relevance of observing the learning challenge through the eyes of teachers is to see that teachers were fully aware of their students' limitations and although space limitations did not allow to include all excerpts, such awareness was mostly accompanied by statements of understanding with may an indication of the engaged pedagogy proposed by Parson and Ozaki (2020) with a focus on the well-being of the learners.

#### Autonomy in language teaching and learning

The pandemic forced us to change our teaching practices. Because of the complexities of maintaining constant interaction with the students, there was a greater opportunity to foster autonomy in language teaching and learning. The identified data across teachers' accounts in different countries were mainly shared with a positive connotation.

The participants shared their ideas on the role of the students and teachers. While teachers took a facilitator role in the learning process (Heidy, MX; Neil, UK), the account shared by our participants also showed negotiation from teachers and students aiming to foster autonomy.

*I think my understanding of autonomy is not the same as their understanding of autonomy, so our expectations are not the same; so they come into the course expecting some kind of support, and then there's the screen behind and between us, and they don't find the support that they expected, so ... once they understood that and once we agree on what my role is and what their role is, it's much easier to see those, these types of autonomy blossom and it happens very quickly (Amy, UK).*



Teachers who participated in this research also shared the different strategies used in the teaching and learning process. The experiences gathered regarding autonomy can be seen in both students and teachers. Most participants mentioned the need to develop time management and a decision-making process, whether selecting platforms to use to work and "feel more comfortable" (Helen, MX). In general terms, only about the third part of the comments carried a negative connotation, such as students' autonomy not being possible (Luis, CN) or autonomy develops only because it is conditioned by the assigning of marks (Mirna, DZ). Furthermore, the data analyzed suggest that perhaps part of the lack of autonomy can be related to the social background:

*I think the undergraduate students at X university are not very good ... there're many reasons why...what you must understand about X university is the entry criteria on the undergraduate are lower than average. ...that's for different reasons, sometimes it's the family background, sometimes is just cognitive ... they do lack of autonomous skills (Neil, UK).*

Nevertheless, two-thirds of the occurrences related to autonomy identified were found to carry a positive connotation. Portia (MX) commented that she could take advantage of the situation to help her students become more independent; Maxwell (TH) found it inspirational that his students made self-video recordings for sharing with the group. Hellen (MX) reckoned her students are moving towards the independence they have been looking for.

Veronica's case (MX) exemplifies that the actions taken by the teacher, such as letting students work more at their own pace, opening a communication channel, relinquishing control, and adapting the assessment activities, resulted in student-centered teaching and a more autonomous learning process.

The data included in this theme support the proposals of Drinkwater (2021) and Fayed & Cummings (2022), who have stated that new education has to be non-hierarchical, allowing students to take more control of their own educational process, and fostering critical thinking and skills to relate their learning to the experiences lived. It also shows, contrary to what has been observed for years (Wright, 2011), that students are more than capable of developing autonomy if the proper conditions are built by educators and

institutions.

### Institutional support

It must be recognized that the educational process deals mainly with teachers and students, but we should not obviate the fundamental role institutions have in it. The experiences shared by teachers in four continents were almost evenly divided between positive and negative connotations, indicating that there was not a unique tendency when exploring how institutions supported their students and teachers in the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the participants in this study reported an absence of institutional support or a limited support system. Luis (CN) referred that the institutional support was mainly on how to use the platform his country selected, while teachers felt neglected in their health; the same situation also lived by Paty (VN); her work as a teacher and coordinator allowed her to see both sides of the coin: *"the policymakers... come to a solution to reduce the burden placed on teachers."*

Maxwell (TH) reported something similar, his institution provided support for technological issues for teachers, but there was no support to *"be trained how to carry out teaching and learning online"*. Samantha (AT) also shared that her university provided only a couple of training courses, and then teachers were left to do what they could by themselves. Mexico was no different in this regard; Portia narrates how as her universities returned from isolation, all teachers were required to work from campus, but they did not provide good Internet service or the resources teachers needed to conduct the hybrid sessions. On the other hand, some participants shared positive experiences where they received institutional support, like Victoria (MX), whose institution provided teachers with equipment to teach online and students with Internet cards to connect to classes. Or Amy (UK), who shared:

*The administrative team was very supportive to the teachers, which was particularly visible, ... Please let us know, and we will make sure to organize a replacement. So, everything was planned for in case somebody gets ill and then we would need a replacement, and that was really, really impressive ... they had actually somebody in the team that was only here to cover whoever needed to be covered.*

## Community of practice

Along with the institutional support, one of the very positive elements identified in this study was the support of communities of practice. The collaboration and collegiality were indispensable during the adaptation process when going from onsite to online and at the time of coming back to whatever modality each institution decided to. Most participants shared their experiences with their communities of practice in a positive connotation. The case of Veronica (MX) echoes the experience of Mirna (DZ), Clare (CH), Molly (CR), Amy (UK), and Paty (VN). They all described how their communication with their colleagues and the support they received from each other in terms of technological knowledge; material creation, online methodology, or even just company helped teachers not only survive but thrive during and after the experience.

*Well, it was a very pleasant job; we started working together, sharing as a team, from digital skills to materials... I could say it was an enriching experience, we updated each other, we lost the fear we had" (Veronica, MX) "we'd meet every fortnight or month...we'd just meet to prepare the questions and to talk about the continuous assessment... how we'd teach the module, the materials we'd use, we'd share, we'd give advice to each other, we'd listen to our classroom stories ... (Mirna, DZ) we support each other in the community of practice, we share everything like: how to upload a photo, how to upload a video (Paty, VN).*

*There was a really good spirit among the teachers and everyone was really supportive to each other and we were all trying to help each other to save time, be efficient, we gave each other's ideas on how we can do it quickly and how we can do it efficiently and safely etc. ...I think the concept of collegiality and the concept of camaraderie, solidarity between educators is key, especially during these times" (Amy, UK).*

The value of teachers' support has been recognized (Ammigan et al., 2022). The experiences shared by our participants contribute to demonstrating the relevance of building communities of practice among teachers and with

students. In the data, it is observable that the positive connotation in the accounts despite the challenges comes from feeling supported and shocking solidarity to those around.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This research has explored the actions taken during the pandemic seen as positive and effective, our participants shared what they consider necessary now and, in the future, to achieve a better-quality education that responds to new realities (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

The first element we identified is the need for technology integration into the teaching and learning process. Every participant in this research had to perform some kind of online teaching, which required them to use a Learning Management System, a platform to lecture the students, and perhaps some apps or software that helped them stay in touch with students. The benefits of technology integration have been widely recognised (Kaur, 2020; Smith et al, 2021; Fayed and Cumming, 2022). While some "older" teachers may find the integration of technology a challenge, teachers like Luis (CN), Clare (CH), or Veronica (MX) see this change as an excellent opportunity to diversify the teaching and learning and improve the communication with students. Technology integration was seen in such beneficial light that, in Veronica's case (MX), her team decided to create a complete language program delivered exclusively online. Likewise, Portia (MX) decided to take the resources she used with her online classes and integrate them into her onsite classes. As Heidi (MX) mentioned, technology is a need now; it is a must. Notwithstanding the great contributions technology has made to the learning and teaching of languages, we must remain critical and realise that much more is needed to create professionals that respond to all the needs of the diverse contextual realities of teachers and students all over the world.

When asking participants what they believed necessary to respond to the new realities, the second recurrent element was greater awareness of the need to integrate new material and methods during the teaching practice. Some participants such as Hellen (MX), shared that because the pandemic had changed focus, what mattered to her now was the teaching and learning process rather than the teaching modality. She emphasised the need to be flexible to integrate what we have learnt into our future teaching. Kaur (2020) stated that

teachers "being the knowledge transmitter[s] who solely prepare lesson plans and deliver them in class is no longer representative of the demands of 21st century education (p. 41). The data in this research suggest our participants have come to the same realisation and are re-examining their roles and lecturing less such as Neil (UK). We see the same tendency in the discourse of Amy (UK): *"because teachers cannot be content providers any more, we must become the guides students need to find their one way to succeed"* and Luis (CN) *"I think as teachers, we should try to change our way of teaching"*.

The third element participants shared as necessary in moving forward is the support between colleagues; the evidence can be observed in the positive connotation the community of practice section shows. Smith et al. (2021) have stressed the need to conduct educational professional development with the support of a community of practice. The experiences shared by our participants show that besides professional development, communication, support, material creation, pedagogical decision, even self-confidence, are better when worked integrated as a community of practice. In the community of practice data, it is worth reflecting on the really positive connotation of the majority of experiences identified by teachers all over the world, whether it be as the social network that supported teachers during the pandemic, such in the case of Paty (VN) and Portia (MX), the team that is working on transforming education like Veronica (MX) and her colleagues, or the temporary relationships created to teach and learn from one another to change from onsite to ERT such as Luis (CN) or Mirna (DZ); the usefulness of this way of work proposed by Kaur (2020) was put to the test and emerged triumphal. Molly's (CR) words summarise this idea: *"We need of a supportive community of practice where all support each other and practice self-care, self-empathy self-compassion."*

The fourth element identified was the need for pedagogy with a Social Justice approach that integrates *"a stance against the systematic and problematic issues of access, race, class, income, and gender"* (Parson & Ozaki, 2020, p. 39). For many years, inequalities have been identified in education (Buckley et al., 2020); the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on such inequalities, and educators are now aware of the need for inclusion. The experiences explored in this research suggest our participants became aware of such inequalities.

*Economic inequality is one of those aspects that we should not disregard when it comes to quality of education, although the people with the*

*end up being the most resourceful ones because you just get the hang of it, you just, you know, you have to hustle your way up, and you have to be as creative as possible to get to the objectives that you have which is acquiring knowledge, acquiring skills in order to improve your life and your family's (Amy, UK)*

The application of the learnt lesson can be seen in the actions that teachers decided to implement from now on: *we can do a needs analysis at the beginning of the year, we see like, sometimes is hard to see their financial status, but at least you ask them "do you have a device, can you like in a month buy one?, for instance, do you have Internet access in your city, town, village or whatever? (Mirna, DZ)*

The literature has already registered challenges faced in education during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ammigan et al., 2022; Long, 2021; Mavridi, 2022; Smith et al., 2021). Experiencing a pandemic has undoubtedly been a critical moment in education; however, it would be unwise to "let a good crisis go to waste" (Churchill, 1940, as cited in Gruère, 2019). On the bright side, we perceive the teaching community in the world as hopeful and willing to learn. The voices of teachers in four continents have expressed the need to aim for an Integrable Pedagogy. Integrable: it must be capable of undergoing integration and being integrated; Pedagogy: it should guide the instruction in language teaching. This integrable pedagogy must be able to integrate technology, a community of practice, a social justice approach, as well as contextualised materials and teaching methods that foster autonomy.

The swift move to innovate during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that change in higher institutions is possible (Smith et al., 2021); therefore, our responsibility as teacher educators is to prepare future generations of language teachers not only to face challenges but also to construct their own theory of practice which responds to the particularities of their teaching-learning contexts and their students' needs. As we are at the beginning of the post-COVID- 19 pandemic era, we must be careful not to let the lived crisis go to waste. While some of the participants are already changing their pedagogy, for some others the tradition or the system is leading them to go back as if the pandemic had never existed and they have gone back to "normal" teaching. But as Long (2021) stated, can we disregard all the learning we had and go back to normal? Don't we have an obligation to look for better options in education? As we move forward, we believe it would be remiss of us as educators to ignore all the voices that demand a more Integrable Pedagogy.

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## CAPÍTULO 7

Mexican ELT Policies Beyond Frontiers: Case Study of Migrant Children  
at Dolores Gonzales Elementary School

Annie Marie Gallegos

annie.gallegosannie@alumno.buap.mx

Josué Cinto Morales

josue.cinto@correo.buap.mx

Maribel Guzmán Mijangos

maribel.gmijangos@correo.buap.mx

Benemérita Autónoma Universidad de Puebla

### Introduction

International policies claim that every citizen of the world should learn at least two additional languages to their mother tongue to fulfill academic and labor mobility, among which migration could include both. Accordingly, the aim of the Mexican Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI) is to “strengthen the technical and pedagogical capacities of public schools of basic education for the teaching and learning of the English language, so that the population in Mexico has access to excellent and relevant education” (SEP, 2022). Therefore, within a competency-based paradigm, these excellence and relevance imply the attainment of some degree of bilingualism.

Bilingualism is often described as a phenomenon in which someone is “brought up with two languages” and is “more or less equally competent in using both languages” (Köktürk et al., 2016, p.1). However, different levels of bilingualism may be accomplished, for instance, speakers with minimal bilingualism understand specific words, signs or characters, but they cannot form complete sentences while those with maximal bilingualism attain native-like proficiency (Baker, 2007). Bilingualism brings about a different perspective when taken into the context of bilingual education policies and provision for minority language groups, especially, taking into account that migration is also a reality in Mexico.

Throughout the mid-'90s, five Mexican states started to implement EFL

programs into their elementary schools. In twenty years, the number went up to 22 out of the 32 states of the Republic (SEP, 2010). However, in most of these programs, there was no standardization of the programs, textbooks, content, number of hours devoted to EFL learning, or methodology nationwide, no pedagogical training for teachers, and not all the schools within a state participated, for example, English Enciclomedia (SEP, 2011b). Unfortunately, programming in most states lasted less than ten years, so many of these programs were replaced by a nationwide program in 2009. According to Ramirez-Romero and Sayer (2016), the objective of the state programs was “to establish an organizational structure which subsequently facilitated the implementation of the national program” (pp. 5-6). These programs were never systematically evaluated and only covered about 10% of programming. For the most part, these programs were only taught in state capitals or the major cities within a state. The state's smaller towns and marginalized areas were left out of the national program (Ramirez-Romero & Sayer, 2016).

Foreign Language reforms and curriculum changes followed in response to the recommendations intended to improve Mexican students' outcomes on standardized language exams. Nevertheless, these changes did not yield the expected results. Considering the British Council (2015) information, roughly 20%, or nearly 24 million of the Mexican population study English as a second language in either a public or private context and at various levels. These statistics place Mexico 44th globally and 6th among Latin-American countries in the English Proficiency Index 2017. The average score of 51.57 is among the low proficiency countries (EF, 2017). The reforms in bilingual education that were instated have proven inadequate thus far.

Conversely, bilingual Education in the United States, Language Enhancement, and Language Acquisition Programs were first instituted in 1968. This policy acknowledged the inherent discrimination of placing those students whose English proficiency level was limited into mainstream general education classrooms without giving proper accommodations for academic success, so the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was created along with the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). This change included a specific focus on standards, assessment, and accountability. These changes led to the inclusion of English language learners into general education classrooms, creating a need to train all teachers to be able to teach them. One of

the principal changes was NCLB's exclusive focus on English language development and the ignoring of the use and development of skills in the use of other languages.

Dolores Gonzales Elementary School (DGES) was the pilot school for the dual-language program within the Albuquerque Public School district. Students in kindergarten and first grade are guided through literacy in their L1 while at the same time developing the L2 through language arts classes. The objective is to create students who are bi-literate, bilingual and bicultural.

The curriculum at Dolores Gonzales Elementary School is based on the three pillars of bilingual education, as suggested by experts: academic achievement, biliteracy, and biculturalism also known as sociocultural competence. To fulfill these three pillars, it is crucial to understand who the learners are in this dual-language program and whom we are servicing, understanding they are different from a monolingual learner. Also, the context in which our students became bilingual, that is, the learners' linguistic configuration, must be considered to design the best support for the complex learning of our unique bilingual learners (Howard et al., 2018). Research from Bunch and Kibler (2005) as well as standards-based reforms indicate that there is critical importance in a curriculum associated with an assets-based, as opposed to a remedial, instructional mode (Bunch et al., 2012; Hamayan et al., 2013; Valdés et al., 2015).

Biliteracy describes a person's literate competencies in two languages. These competencies can be developed either simultaneously or progressively. Fluency is also achieved in reading and writing. Reading and writing skills and knowledge are developed through standards for English language arts which include the areas of foundational skills (phonics, word recognition, and fluency), writing and reading (literary and informational text).

Biculturalism is a description of the status of being identified by two cultures, incorporating with oneself the identity and behaviors of both cultures. This occurs consequently as the result of varying situations such as immigration and mixed heritage.

Child development research has established that programs that promote socio emotional learning have a momentous impact upon student academic success in all grade levels (Durlak et al., 2011). Sociocultural

competence includes students' behavioral, attitudinal, and academic development. The curricula must contain multiple opportunities for students to develop positive attitudes about not only themselves, but about others as well, that is, cultural knowledge and a sense of their, and others' identities (ethnic, linguistic, and cultural), in a way does not promote stereotypes.

All three pillars are interactive components of a bilingual system. All three coexist and collaborate to develop the skills needed to complete the communicative competence within the student, allowing them to use the second language as a tool to complete the learning process in both languages.

The ambiguity of foreign language policy in Mexico has caused a significant disparity in the acquisition of English among students who immigrate to the United States. Their transition from one education system to another displays the weaknesses, lacks, and gaps in the attainment of the goals established in the Mexican National English Program and, therefore, education policy implementation.

Hence, an analysis of the Mexican policy for the inclusion of foreign language learning within the traditional system and a summary of the Foreign Language Policy that the United States upholds are provided and discussed within the framework of the systems theory. In addition, previous research is presented to find possible gaps in the integration of Mexican children into the American bilingual system. The following questions are answered: What are the components that make up the experience of students who were once participants of the Mexican education system and are now enrolled within the bilingual education program of Dolores Gonzales Elementary school? How does the immersion bilingual program go beyond immediate utility to consider the way communicative competence is encouraged? What role does the ability to speak English play in the process of adaptation to school and other ordinary tasks?

## **Literature Review**

Foremost, it is crucial to discuss what an education policy is, policy implementation, the specific Mexican and US language teaching policies, and the implications their implementation has within an education system, and this discussion and analysis framed by the theory of systems.

### Theory of systems

According to the Theory of systems (Bertalanffy, 1972), a system is composed of a whole made up of interacting parts, that is, systems or subsystems interrelated to function as a whole to attain a common purpose. Therefore, organizations, institutions and schools are interacting parts within an education system which interact with their environment to survive, so “a system functions by acquiring inputs from the external environment, transforming them in some way, and discharging outputs back to the environment” (Draft, 2010, p. 78). Draft (2010) points out that five main variables determine the level of effectiveness a system manages to accomplish, namely, inputs, transformation process, outputs, feedback, and the environment. First, inputs refer to material, financial, information and human resources, including students, teachers, and other participants, used to produce educational services and outcomes within the educational and social setting. These inputs must undergo a transformation process, understood as the application and management of technology to turn inputs into outputs, that is, valuable services and expected outcomes, for instance, language communicative competence and the attainment of standards stated in the formal curriculum. Feedback refers to the gathering of information analyzed and processed which is used for decision-making regarding the selection of inputs, improvement of the transformation process and, therefore, the quality of outcomes and services. Finally, the surrounding social, political and economic forces that influence schools, for example, make up the environment.

### Policy implementation

According to Trowler (2003), an education policy is seen as a set of specified principles and guidelines, designed to produce specific actions oriented by the desired goals in the education system. Consequently, policy implementation defined as “a purposeful and multidirectional change process aiming to put a specific policy into practice, and which may affect an education system on several levels” (Viennet & Pont, 2017, p.6) must be analyzed based on the effectiveness of the transformation process within the education system and the quality of the outputs, that is, the changes and effects of services and outcomes established in the curriculum.

## Curriculum

Although the curriculum is often defined as a set of objectives and contents held in a document, within an education system, the existence of a document containing that information will not suffice. However, if curriculum development and design should be conceived as a systematic process which, according to Brown (1995) must depart from a needs analysis, that is, learners' needs, wants and lacks to define objectives, goals, assessment procedures, instructional methods, and didactic materials. Nevertheless, curriculum is a complex construct as it includes tangible elements such as documents, materials, resources, facilities but also intangible elements such as the institutional philosophy, participants' beliefs, decision-making, the experiences learners must undergo to develop the abilities, skills, values and knowledge required beyond the classroom, for example, when they travel or migrate to another country where English will no longer be a subject but a means of communication used for labor, academic and survival purposes. Thus, an educational curriculum can also be seen as a process which displays experiences, actions and procedures which lead learners to the accomplishments stated in the official documents which provide guidelines for the implementation of a program. Bravlsky (1999) defines curriculum as a tacit social contract between education institutions and the society.

The curriculum, however, does not always result from systematic research within the immediate social milieu but from international recommendations which are later shaped into education policies. For instance, UNESCO suggests that every citizen in the world should learn at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue for better communication among people. This recommendation was translated into a national policy in Mexico giving birth to the National English Program for Basic Education (NEPBE) and National English Program (PRONI). Thus, foreign language policies must be analyzed to understand their origins and goals.

## Methodology

This study was qualitative, with a holistic research approach, which allowed for several perspectives to be considered with the understanding that the phenomenon has a multiplicity of factors that interact in the subjects' lives.



The participants were 5 children who had commenced their formal education in Mexico, either in a public or a private school, had taken English classes and migrated to the United States. These students were enrolled within the bilingual programs at Dolores Gonzales Elementary School, within the Barelas community in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They were two males and three females whose age ranged between 7 and 10. They represented a specific segment within the broader population of DGES and served as the primary data source for the research. Two mothers also participated in the study to complement the data gathered from the children.

This longitudinal research was treated as a case study, gathering data through participant observation and interviews. The participants were observed mainly in three different contexts: homeroom, pullouts, and cafeteria/recess, for instance, while they were eating or during recess to create rapport with the group members, and keenly observe the situations that arose in the academic setting. Observations in each one of these contexts allowed to gain a more complex understanding of how each student was able to communicate in other areas throughout an ordinary day at school. Detailed notes were taken of what had been observed to draw inferences and conclusions about the phenomenon. The information gathered from these memories was coded, analyzed, and interpreted.

Interviews were not in person because of district guidelines derived from the pandemic and frequent Covid positive cases. Oral history informal and in-depth interviews were used to enhance the richness of the information regarding perceptions, experiences, and accounts of the students as they painted a picture of their experience using their own words. Interviews with parents were also helpful because they allowed a detailed understanding of how each student interacts, using either the target language or L1 with their families.

For ethical considerations, participants' informed consent was sought prior to data collection and analysis, and there was a great precaution to treat the total study population as one entity so that it would remain a case study. Sufficient time spent with children and their parents built a trustworthy rapport before collecting any information about them so that the data could be reliable.

The instrument for the interviews was broken up into four focus areas: understanding the students' current context, components of experiences, the

role of the process of assimilation/acculturation, and experiences in Mexican public/private schools. The same four focus areas were used in taking observation notes.

## Results and Discussion

Some variables and structures of interaction between peers, teachers, and other staff members at school were identified to assess the students' performance and development. The results are analyzed and discussed based on five basic components of a system, namely, inputs, transformation process, outputs, feedback, and environment.

### Student's Experiences in Bilingual Education in Mexico

The student's experiences make up an important indicator of the Mexican education policies' effectiveness and the National English Program as a system. The results show that their experiences with the English language varied not only in the programs in which they were enrolled but also by the methods that teachers utilized to teach the students. Even though the external environment, that is, real settings where English is spoken

Although Student D was enrolled in a bilingual school, the teaching method seems to be inconsistent with the development of communicative competence. English was not the means of communication; therefore, the transformation process was not coherent with the goals established in the Mexican policies.

*I study English in México. My teacher likes cows. Ella nos enseñaba inglés, English, the English. Yo recuerdo que le gustaban las vacas y cada viernes si terminamos nuestros trabajos ella nos dejaba traer un juguete para compartir con el grupo. Nos hablaba mucho en español porque le decíamos que no entendíamos. Cuando trabajábamos en el student book, ella usaba el proyector para mostrarnos su libro en línea. (Student D)*

Student D had taken English the three years of kindergarten and the first

three years of elementary school. However, the teaching method created a student who is dependent on translation to understand the person who is instructing. Exposure to the language is one essential condition for language acquisition (Willis, 1996), so English should be used as the main means of communication, and teachers should use strategies which help learners create meaning such as body language and even motherese language (Ellis, 1997). Code-switching should be used moderately; although at the beginning its use could be high, especially by learners, it should eventually vanish. Thus, learners' attempts to use the language are rather futile, that is, outputs seem to be inappropriate because of an ineffective transformation process, and the provision of feedback to the Mexican English programs. When a student can cover form and meaning, their language awareness will increase, consequently, enhancing their abilities to manage the language independently (Fish, 2003) and develop communicative competence. When translation is overused within a classroom, the students are usually taught about the language, not how to use the language as a tool to develop communicative competence.

Student B, on the other hand, had no memory of their experience in an English classroom.

*Yo no aprendí english en la escuela, lo aprendí contigo. Las misses no hablaban en inglés, solamente tú en México.*

Student B studied three years of kindergarten in Mexico, in a private bilingual school. The student only had an English class for two hours each day, no other classes were taught in English. Student A also has no recollection of taking English classes in Mexico. When asked about their English classes, their response was "no recuerdo". This points to the teacher designing activities that did not create meaningful learning. According to Ballester Vallori et al. (2002), there are six essential principles that create meaningful learning within a learning environment: open work, motivation, relatable means, creativity, concept mapping, and adaptable curricula. In the teaching of the language there was not sufficient application of these concepts to create a meaningful learning experience for both students to remember.

### Student's Experiences in Bilingual Education in New Mexico.

There are various specialized services within DGES. Reading and mathematics interventionists are available for the students who participated within the project. When asked about their learning environments in small groups, Student B stated:

*La Miss me explica en español, y pone el trabajo en la tele [promethean board]. La otra Miss me ayuda también, se siente conmigo. Pero ella habla poquito español. Yo quiero aprender a escribir frases largas, largas [emphasis on the s].*

Student A also recollected her first online classes because of the pandemic.

*Empecé las clases en línea, pero regresé a Chihuahua con mi familia y tomaba las clases en casa. Podía entender cuando las clases estaban en español y le preguntaba a mi papá cuando no entendía lo que decía la maestra en inglés.*

Although the learning environments varied, both students needed guided practice learning either with a family member because of the circumstances of online learning, or a teacher's approximation inside of the classroom. Student B had one on one learning because the teacher sat next to them and guided the student through the different activities. However, there seems to be a barrier for the student because they state that the teacher is not fluent in Spanish, and the student shows motivation in wanting to learn more complex sentences than what they were being taught at that moment.

Research from Lambert (1984) has expressed the monolingual instructional philosophy underlying an immersion program as:

No bilingual skills are required of the teacher, who plays the role of a monolingual in the target language...and who never switches languages, reviews materials in the other language, or otherwise uses the child's native language in teacher-pupil interactions. In immersion programs, therefore, bilingualism is developed through two separate monolingual instructional routes. (p. 13)

This monolingual instructional strategy, what Howatt (1984) referred to as the "monolingual principle" emphasizes the instructional use of the target language, excluding the students L1, with the objective of enabling students to think in the target language with little interference from their L1. The beginning process of the monolingual instructional philosophy of the teacher should utilize specific strategies to accomplish the goal of thinking in the target language as well as to help the students learn how to self-regulate through the learning process which can at times create frustration. Teachers must also take heed and create pathways for students to effectively reach their personal goals that are ignited by their own motivation.

Student E had a more detailed account of their learning environment.

*Cuando voy a mi clase de matemáticas, son pocos alumnos. La Miss nos enseña en inglés y luego lo dice en español. Si es un tema nuevo me cuesta entenderla cuando lo explica en inglés. Pero si es un tema que ya hemos hecho, le puedo entender un poco más.*

When asked about how Student E asks for help when they do not understand the topic, they continued to say:

*Nuestra clase de matemáticas es corta, y a veces no me da tiempo preguntarle a la miss de mate, pero le pido ayuda a mi miss. Me ayuda durante la clase.*

Student E was experiencing difficulty understanding more complex mathematical equations in English. Their level of proficiency was a stumbling block to accomplish this real-world task. According to the RIEB, sustained and efficient learning of English was guaranteed to take place. Through PND and the PSE, there is a guarantee for all students in Mexico to acquire knowledge through classroom activities to develop their understanding and ability to use a foreign language. The deficiency of these supposedly acquired abilities in the communicative competence result in a limitation of their capacity to learn and understand under these circumstances. Also, because the student knows that

there is another teacher who can also translate the information for them, there is no real necessity for this student to have the motivation to understand these daily tasks in English.

It is also important to consider that significant positive relationships can exist between the development of academic skills in the first and second languages. Cummings (1979,1981) introduced the “interdependence hypothesis” which was expressed as:

To the extent that instruction in L<sub>x</sub> is effective in promoting proficiency in L<sub>x</sub>, transfer of this proficiency to L<sub>y</sub> will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L<sub>y</sub> (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L<sub>y</sub>. (1981, p. 29)

In other words, in an academic setting, the Spanish-English bilingual instruction that develops Spanish reading and writing skills is not only developing Spanish skills, but a deeper theoretical and linguistic proficiency which is heavily related to the development of literacy in English. By way of explanation, surface aspects such as pronunciation and fluency of different languages lack resemblance, there lies conceptual proficiency, or a knowledge base that is common in all languages. Genesee et al. (2006) call this a cross-linguistic reservoir of abilities, which allows the possibility of transferring concepts, literacy skills, and learning strategies from one language to another. Because there is a lack in the development of communicative competence for these students, there is a need to utilize not only their proficient language to understand but also take hold of the learning strategies which they have fully developed in the same language.

#### Immersion bilingual program and immediate utility

The immersion bilingual program at DGES goes beyond utility to consider the way communicative competence is encouraged. Parent A gave a clear example of this concept when they were asked about their child’s development of the target language within their general education classroom.

*She is in classes in which her teachers speak Spanish and English. I think this is helping her to learn the language quickly. She was also surrounded by children who spoke both languages. She struggled at first in the classroom to learn English, but when combined with social experiences where she had to use English, her skills have improved. She also attended the afterschool program, participated in their soccer team and Folkloric group.*

Recognizing that struggle and frustration is a common theme with young bilingual students, this immersion bilingual program has created opportunities in which the students can experience the target language to create meaningful learning. The parent understands that the social interaction of their child has led them to use and understand English in activities that were part of the school environment, but outside of the context of the classroom. These meaningful learning experiences, however informal, have allowed students to relate new concepts of language development to their pre-existing familiar concepts of the language. Unlike the learning experiences that Student B experienced in Mexico, this student can use the social experiences to obtain a greater understanding of how to communicate in English. Allowing the student to participate in different activities that are more leisure and creative increases the motivation of the student to utilize the language and improve their skills.

Interviewed parents maintain an appreciation of multiculturalism and linguistic diversity. Rumbaut (1994) points out major differences in the social and cultural adaptation of the immigrant group. There is a distinct difference between an immigrant child and being the child of an immigrant. There is also a difference in socioeconomic background between these two children. These theories' perspectives extend in extremes from pessimistic to optimistic according to how and how well immigrants and their children are becoming part of society. The person resists learning English, loyalty is given to their ethnic community and home country. Student D unfolded their perspective on this challenge that Huntington spoke of.

*Bueno es que casi todos en la escuela hablan español. También cuando jugamos fútbol, somos mexicanos, hasta la coach nos habla en español. Hablo con mi familia en español porque siempre hemos hablado en español.*

Several factors can be observed in this brief portion of the interview

with Student D. The lingua franca, Spanish, has become a bonding aspect for this student. It gives the student a cultural identity with their peers in this speech community, which also includes their family. Although the student refers to their coach in English, it is this same person who also promotes communication in Spanish. The student is enveloped in their community using their home language, creating a sense of security in the school environment.

The theory of Vygotsky's scaffolding and the More Knowledgeable Other plays a role in different aspects of these student's day to day life. Four of the students have an English MKO at home. These MKOs range from parents, grandparents, stepparents, and other family members. There was a difference between the students whose family still reside in Mexico and those students who have extended family in both Mexico and New Mexico. The parent's perspective of the importance and reasoning to learn English was highly academic and insurance of survival for the family whose family still resides in Mexico.

Parent A has family in Mexico but is a mixed family. Mother is from New Mexico and father is from Veracruz, Mexico. Their plans were/are to stay in the United States. They explained why learning English is important for their students.

*Learning English is necessary. Learning English is the only way we could guarantee a certain percentage of success in school. The teachers set the expectation that she needed to be independent with her work assignments. Without some English skills she was bound to fail. She has struggled to acquire the necessary writing skills due to other factors. Without basic writing and speaking skills she was not able to complete this task.*

Elaborating on the way the student has encountered adequate help to continuously develop their English skills Parent A affirmed:

*At home we watch shows like Hannah Montana and PBS cartoons to help her learn English. We also go to the library weekly and read together. During her free time as she learns to read and write [in English], I give her journal prompts she had to pick out of a tin box. She was required to write on*



*that topic for about 15 minutes. Music is also used. She is allowed to listen to songs in English.*

An example of Alba and Nee's new melting-pot view can be understood with the parents' perspective and concern for their child to learn English. This perspective states exposure to the host society and assimilation are imminent. There is an understanding that this parent, who depended on intuition because of lack of pedagogical formation, was able to understand that developing the communicative competence in their child would bring academic achievement to bring effective assessment of their child in either standardized assessment or either formative or summative assessment. By exposing their child, although involuntarily, to the target language in different contexts the child begins to develop these skills, however, there is a struggle for both mother and child. The parent is putting in the effort to develop autonomy to meet the expectations of teachers. Because of the mother's academic formation, she was able to become her child's MKO, and guide her through the complexities that come with becoming bilingual and bicultural at a young age.

Although technology is used within the context of a classroom for various activities throughout a school day, all the participants also have access to the internet at home and use their school devices to watch videos on YouTube. Students often learn English from YouTubers, Tik Tokers and music videos which catch their attention. The way they begin to speak in English is not always grammatically correct.

Student D affirmed the enjoyable experience in learning English through YouTube and Tik Tok.

*I like YouTube and Tik Tok. I like to watch kids play Minecraft. They tell secrets of game. We watch fun videos on Tik Tok...I learned bad words [giggles], and people are groseros, pero es chistoso.*

Voluntary exposure to the target language can be observed in this example. The student invests an undisclosed amount of time being exposed to English when it is produced informally. In watching videos on YouTube or

Tik Tok, the student is not able to ask people to switch codes. This is an example of an instance where informal curriculum is more impactful than formal curriculum. There is a great difference in this example in comparison to the student who has difficulty in their small math group. There is no persistent avoidance of making an active effort to understand the information that is being transmitted in English through YouTube and TikTok. According to Vygotsky (1978), this cognitive development in Student A is the result of social interactions from guided learning (scaffolding) within the zone of proximal development as both people involved, although there is no face-to-face interaction, co-construct knowledge that is specific to their own lives. The environment in which a child is being formed, will have a profound effect on how they think and what they think about. This student was able to pick up aspects of the language without formal instruction through scaffolding.

## **Conclusions**

Instruction of English in Mexico ranged from almost non-existent to constant translation, either because the teacher did not have the proficiency level to help students develop the communicative competence, or because meaningful learning was not established. The difficulty that the students have experienced not only in the academic context, but also socially has proven that the curricula from the Mexican education system fails in developing the communicative competence within their student body.

DGES has achieved academic advancements not only in the academic arena but also for the community. However, there are challenges that the school has faced. Gentrification, the pandemic, and the option of homeschooling and the availability of charter schools have brought down the number of students who are English learners. This has caused a change in the 50/50 structure in the program, becoming 70/30.

For the most part, the standards for the curriculum have been upheld by DGES, however, the student's perspective of the bilingual program is that Spanish is promoted more than English. In this perspective, both languages are not being equally promoted. This creates an understanding that there is no motivation for the student to speak or strive to understand English in more complex academic material. However, the qualitative study limitations in scope

are that only a handful of students were able to describe their experience, therefore, generalizations cannot be made.

Each interacting part of the immigrant child's experience, which envelopes the theory of systems, has at times held a completely different perspective than that of the child. The subsystem of the administration and teachers at DGES have taken the responsibility and duty to provide the student with the opportunity to become bilingual in a safe and respectful environment. The inputs that the administration, teachers, school counselor, and behavior redirector all produce educational services that differ from one another but are intertwined. Each has a unique perspective that derives from the curricula instated and dual language educational policies, which bring forth a transformation process in which the expected outcome or the output, which is that of the communicative competence. Although the focus of the inputs is on the attainment of standards stated in the formal curriculum and the details that entail the social climate of the school environment, the perspective of students, is at times focused solely on social aspects, and the process of acculturation while learning in an environment in which they were not previously prepared for. Although the problem is now on the side of the United States, Mexico still needs to rebuild its policies on language teaching so that they go beyond speech to create actions and a real transformation process which benefits those who will sooner or later migrate.

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## CAPÍTULO 8

### Physical learning settings' impact on students' participation in Emergency Remote Teaching lessons

Fernando Hernandez Calixto  
fernandohcalixto@gmail.com

Universidad Veracruzana

Patricia Núñez Mercado

pnunez@uv.mx

Universidad Veracruzana

#### **Introduction**

With the sudden emergent situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions worldwide were obliged to switch to an alternative teaching modality called Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). This caused an unprecedented change in academic activities, for example, the sudden need to adapt the material to an online setting, and the use of different means of communication which moving from face-to-face classes to online environments implied; this for those contexts in which access to an internet connection was available. It is then important to make a distinction between online learning and ERT since there is a tendency to misinterpret these concepts.

Online learning is a virtual community resulting from a preplanned instructional design, curricula, and development (Barbour et al., 2020; Hodges et al. 2020). Furthermore, this online modality addresses and fulfills students' needs beforehand. On the other hand, ERT should be understood as an unplanned practice, with a limited variety of resources to deliver online instruction, and where lack of both material and teacher training were distinctive (Bond et al., 2021; Le & Truong, 2021). The ERT instruction modality was implemented as a mitigation step so as not to interrupt students' learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a such measure, it drastically influenced students' online school performance and many challenges appeared along with it, for instance, reluctance to participate in



class, not submitting assignments on time, not using the camera and microphone to interact with their teacher or classmates, among others.

In addition, the unexpected change from face-to-face classes to ERT lessons made students adopt a new learning environment and develop a new learning setting at home. However, many did not immediately succeed in creating an appropriate physical learning setting with optimal tools such as earphones, a camera, a microphone, a comfortable desk, and a seat. Students' lack of interest and reluctance to actively participate in their ERT lessons might have been caused at the beginning by the inadequate learning physical context that they had developed to face the pandemic due to the sudden shift it implied.

There is not much information on which physical learning environments or tools may have encouraged students to take part in ERT lessons. Therefore, the main purpose of this action research was to identify an appropriate physical learning setting and context for students to take their lessons during the ERT, and as a result improve student participation. Additionally, by identifying those elements from the physical learning environment hindering students' motivation to participate, this study sought to provide students with a strategy to arrange their learning setting in a particular way during ERT instruction or any future learning situation involving online environments.

With the aforementioned purpose, the following were the main research questions set for the study:

- What physical learning environment elements are hindering students' participation during the ERT in this COVID-19 pandemic?

- What physical learning environment elements may foster students' participation during ERT in this COVID-19 pandemic?

To answer these questions, it was necessary to look into the students' general attitudes toward participating in the ERT lessons that might have been a result of their physical learning settings, their perceptions of this physical learning setting, and their actual learning environment physical conditions at the beginning of the pandemic. It was also necessary to identify their learning

environment conditions once the action plan was implemented and then revisit their perceptions of their physical learning setting, as well as their general attitudes towards participating in ERT lessons after this intervention.

## Literature Review

As mentioned before, it is first important to differentiate online learning from Emergency Remote Teaching in order to approach any educational phenomena during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, other relevant concepts will also be discussed: synchrony, and learning environment, as they have a direct relation to the research topic and the action plan implemented.

### Online learning versus Emergency Remote Teaching

Online learning is thought to be the result of meticulous instructional design and planning, which takes time to define the curricula and its main aim is to support learners (Hodges et al., 2020). Bonfield et al. (2020) define this term as a “well-planned, well-designed and pedagogically effective online teaching that will meet the needs of learners and future employers” (p. 1). Online learning is characterized by its flexibility to be accessed from any location, not to mention that this type of learning allows student interaction through several media (Doko, 2021).

On the other hand, due to the pandemic, "online learning" was an option to face this situation of emergency so students' learning process was not interrupted. What resulted was actually denominated Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). ERT should be contemplated as a nonpermanent solution to a sudden problem. ERT's objective is to support and provide quick access to education, reliable enough in times of crisis (Hodges et al., 2020). Nevertheless, according to Mseleku (2020), different challenges emerged along with ERT, such as difficulty to adjust, internet issues, and lack of teaching and learning resources, among others.

### Synchrony

There are two ways to deliver online instruction, synchronously and asynchronously. According to Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021), "the difference

between the two modes lie in that in synchronous online teaching the instructor and students are physically separated but communicate in real time, whereas in asynchronous online teaching the separation is both spatial and temporal" (p.3).

Unlike asynchronous lessons, synchronous implies the teacher and learners are in the same virtual class, in other words, the teacher must deliver instruction in real-time through a digital platform where interaction between teacher and students, and among students themselves, takes place. While conducting a synchronous lesson, the class should become a student-centered environment (Amiti, 2020). Synchronous lessons during the ERT come along with some advantages. Since teachers and students have the opportunity to interact by asking and answering questions in real time, students may engage in lessons instead of feeling completely isolated, therefore avoiding frustration (Shandra & Chystiakova, 2021).

#### Learning Environment

A virtual learning environment is related to a specific online community that needs internet connectivity to deliver material and instruction to students and teachers (O'Leary & Ramsden, 2004). This online environment consists of particular empirical aspects regarding students' learning process: the people, technological devices and their role, the learning community, and the items in the room (Sawyer, 2005). In addition to this, students within this learning environment are not only active but also become actors; they build their own space (Dillenbourg et al., 2002).

Learning environments may have a direct influence on students' learning process, as well as their motivation to take part in the lesson and engagement. Virtual environments can be perceived as a positive space where students' educational performance and experience are being benefited as well (Dayag, 2018). Furthermore, this setting offers many advantages, for example, it fosters interaction and collaboration among students, provides tools to enhance communication, and promotes participation. Since virtual learning environments have a direct influence on students' behavior and performance, the setting should meet the basic needs of the learners. Cantero et al. (2016) highlight the importance of including ventilation, lights, and appropriate furniture, for instance.

Due to the pandemic, students' learning environments had to be redefined, and teachers had to adapt the material to an online context to engage students in ERT lessons. Therefore, this new virtual environment led to the usage of different platforms to communicate with students during ERT, and students, with the support of their parents, had to develop a new physical learning setting at home.

## **Methodology**

As the purpose of this study was to implement an action plan in order to have a positive impact on students' motivation to participate in ERT lessons, the methodological aspects are of paramount importance. As follows, the methodological approach, the type of study, the context, the participants, the data collection instruments, and data analysis methods are described.

### Qualitative Approach

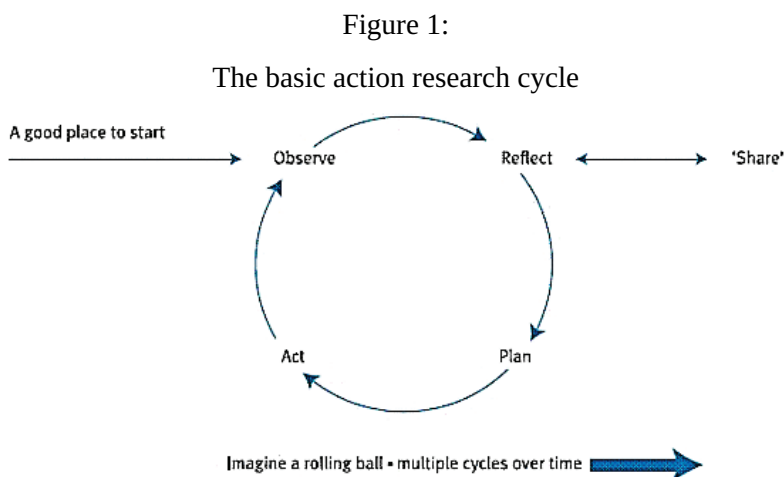
A qualitative approach was considered as the best option since it allows the researcher to comprehend a specific phenomenon, issue or situation as well as to understand how people make meaning of their social world (Hesse-Biber, 2010). In addition to this, this paper constitutes an epistemological basic belief because the researcher and the group of participants are seen as independent factors. Guba and Lincoln (1992) point out that the epistemological approach is dualist and objectivist. This means that the epistemological paradigm offers the researcher to investigate and observe the participants without having a direct influence. From this view, this research paper with an epistemological basic belief follows a qualitative research approach as its main objective is to analyze, understand, and enhance students' physical learning setting to foster participation during ERT lessons.

### Action Research

Action research is a reflective process that gives the opportunity to inquire and discuss. Furthermore, the researcher provides a possible solution to problems in a social context (Crokey & Heigham, 2009; Ferrance, 2000). In other words, the main aim of this approach is to find out more about what is happening in a social context in order to change or improve a given situation. It

also looks for a reframing chance through two concurrent processes: taking action and doing research which lead to critical reflection.

There are four main stages of action research which are observation, reflection, planification, and action. Narváez et al. (2017) illustrate the steps of action research in the following figure as a cycle which guides the researcher to investigate, analyze and plan a course of action to improve or solve an issue.



(Narváez et al., 2017, p. 21)

The present study was conducted under an action research design within the context of students’ physical learning settings and its impact on participation. The researcher was given the opportunity to collect information regarding low students’ participation and inadequate learning settings, as well as implementing an action plan to positively enhance participation by establishing strategies to improve the learning settings for synchronous ERT lessons. For this study, a complete action research cycle was implemented during a five-month period.

## Context

This study was conducted in a private Mexican foreign language school in the State of Veracruz founded in 2018. The main aim of this school is to prepare English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to be competent in the

target language and provides ESOL certification courses according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages, for instance A2 Key (formerly KET), B1 Preliminary (formerly PET), and B2 First (formerly FCE).

In April 2020, ERT was implemented due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The principal of this private school decided to hold ERT via the Zoom platform by purchasing the full pro version in order to provide a better learning experience for students and allow them to continue with their learning process. The Zoom pro version allows teachers to give ERT lessons with no time limit. Furthermore, breakout rooms can also be created so students can carry out EFL activities in teams and foster communicative skills. However, some students did not seem to engage with the online lessons nor showed willingness to participate in the activities.

### Participants

The participants of this research were twelve students who used to take their face-to-face classes on Saturdays before the pandemic lockdown. These Saturday classes were held in the academic institution from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm (five hours long). There was a 30-minute break where students could have lunch and interact with their teacher and classmates in the target language.

The twelve participants were between fifteen and sixteen years old and they were taking a B1 Preliminary certification course before the lockdown. As they were under age, their parents signed a consent form to allow their participation in the present study. Once the pandemic started, the students' onsite classes switched to ERT lessons. The schedule of the ERT lessons was Mondays and Thursdays from 4:30 pm to 6:10 pm, and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 11:40 am, that is to say, five hours per week.

This specific group was chosen because it was noticed through observations that when the teenage learners finally activated their cameras, they seemed to have just woken up, were still in bed, did not have a strong internet connection, or were about to have breakfast or any kind of snack. Students' parents were involved in their students' learning process in that they would frequently ask for their children's scores and what they can do to improve them. A meeting with them was held in order to discuss students' performance and possible strategies to enhance their language skills.

## Data Collection Methods

Barrett and Twycross (2018) point out that different data collection methods help the researcher have a better understanding of the participants, explore how choices are made and provide a deep insight of a specific phenomenon. In this case, participants were approached to gather information about what physical learning setting may foster or hinder students' participation during the COVID-19 pandemic and what can be done to improve their current learning setting as well as to promote participation. To do so, the data collection methods chosen were semi-structured observations and semi-structured interviews to obtain an insight of why students do not engage in participating in their ERT lessons. In order to gather this information, two semi-structured observation sheets were designed to make sense of students' behavior and reactions, and two semi-structured interviews were conducted.

### Semi-structured Observation

Creswell (2009) defines semi-structured observations as field notes taken on behavior and activities from the participants. For the present study, the researcher recorded information using some pre-established questions but also contemplating unpredicted outcomes. Strictly speaking, the researcher used a checklist to arrange the information and examine students' physical learning settings; this same semi-structured observation sheet let the researcher record unexpected outcomes.

Two different observation sheets were created; the initial observation sheet used to gather preliminary data before the action plan and the final observation sheet used during the implementation of the action plan. The elements to be considered before and after the implementation of the action plan are the following: use of the microphone, use of the camera, students raising their hands to participate, students' cooperation in class, students' active participation in discussions, students' independent initiative, students' access to needed material, students' learning setting, distractors, and comments (unexpected outcomes).

### Semi-structured Interview

Gill et al. (2008) point out that "semi-structured interviews consist of

several questions, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail" (p.1). This means that the semi-structured interview is a flexible group of queries which give the researcher room to ask follow-up questions. Furthermore, Barrett and Twycross (2018) add that "a semi-structured interview should ensure data are captured in key areas while still allowing flexibility for participants to bring their own personality and perspective to the discussion" (p. 1).

Thus, for the present study, a semi-structured interview was conducted to give the participants a space to express themselves freely. A semi-structured interview guide was developed for the initial stage and then a second guide one was developed for interviews conducted after the action plan had been implemented. Both semi-structured interview guides were created with the intention to better understand and identify what types of setting may foster students' participation in ERT lessons.

### Data Analysis

Jackson et al. (2007) define content analysis as "a method to conduct a systematic objective, qualitative textual analysis that involves comparing, contrasting, and categorizing a set of data" (p. 6). This type of data analysis method aims attention at recorded content which may provide new insights, and therefore allow the inquirer to gain a better understanding of a particular issue. There are three approaches when conducting content analysis: inductive, deductive and abductive. For the purposes of this research, an abductive approach was followed.

According to Graneheim et al. (2017), "the abductive approach can be employed for a more complete understanding and implies a movement back and forth between inductive and deductive approaches" (p.6). Both data collection methods, semi-structured observation and semi-structured interview, were developed under this approach. The semi-structured observation sheet was based on a previous observable framework which led the researcher to observe different variables and then understand them (deductive), although room for unexpected data was assigned as well (inductive). As for the semi-structured interview, not only the list of elements that were to be observed was the main focus, but also learners' perceptions of their learning settings.



Both deductive and inductive approaches were used to design the guides and then analyze the data gathered.

Additionally, open coding was used when analyzing data to identify new categories and compare them. Coding is the process of repeatedly scanning the information obtained from the data collection methods and identifying emerging categories (Burns, 2010). This type of coding "includes labeling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimension" (Khandkar, 2009, p.1). While analyzing the gathered data from the semi-structured interview and semi-structured observation, the researcher decided to use open coding to arrange the information into labels so concepts and their relationships could be identified, by then triangulating data from the outcomes of the initial research and final outcomes after the action plan implementation.

### Findings

The main categories that emerged from observing students' behavior during the ERT classes, as well as their physical learning settings, are related to the students' emotions, equipment used in the lessons, and distractors. As previously mentioned, semi-structured interviews were transcribed to be analyzed through coding and the semi-structured observation sheets were examined before and after the implementation of the action plan to identify what and how students' setting can be improved. In the following categories, where the participants' voices from the interviews are included, pseudonyms are used for the sake of confidentiality.

#### Students' Emotions

While analyzing the semi-structured interviews, students mentioned that they had a feeling of uncertainty, an absence of readiness to take their ERT lessons. Similarly, other studies have found out that, since the ERT was something unexpected, students barely had time to address education at home (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2020; Nguyen, 2021). In addition, similarly to the participants in those studies, the participants of the present study had a lack of autonomous learning skills and inadequate ICT resources, which made them

experience high levels of stress. In one of the participants' words, "at the beginning, I was terrified because it was something new" (Julieta). Roberto also shared having felt discomfort while facing ERT, "I don't feel very well, because it is difficult."

Older and more independent students, or students with previous online learning experience, had a more positive attitude towards ERT lessons, as is the case of the participants' in a study by Le and Truong (2021), who shared that, from the beginning, they considered ERT convenient as well as time-saving. Participants in this study, however, developed a more positive attitude toward ERT only after the action plan was implemented. Whenever students faced an issue, such as having to share their screen or fix their microphone, they knew how to do it: "after a couple of weeks of online classes, I got used to it and now I do not feel anxious or frustrated when I have to share something because I know what to do" (Kimberly). As a result, learners began to improve their digital competence and issues regarding technology, and frustration seemed to be decreasing.

Another stressing factor at the beginning was the limited access to appropriate equipment and internet connection. This affected students' interaction among their classmates causing camera lag, among other problems. Julieta, for example, struggled with her internet connection a lot: "the most frustrating thing was the internet, it was unstable and my microphone and camera image lagged, making it difficult to understand the teacher and vice versa". It is logical to assume, then, that, if students did not count on the necessary gadgets or a stable internet connection to take ERT lessons, they would very likely not be comfortable in their learning environment (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

After the implementation, students managed to find strategies to tackle these issues. Whenever they had problems with the internet connection, for example, learners would just turn their cameras off so they would not have problems listening to the teacher and classmates. Furthermore, it was observed that even those students with a weak internet connection seemed more attracted to the ERT lessons because of an increase in social engagement activities, such as interactive videos, class-related games, and fill in the gap songs, among others. This suggests that the contents of teaching resources constitute an important element for students to feel more motivated and thus engage more

meaningfully in online synchronous lessons during ERT (Yoon, 2020).

### Students' Physical Learning Settings

Undoubtedly, the physical setting where instruction takes place influences students' engagement in their learning, and since students relate this environment to school facilities, it is logical that they would find it difficult to identify their homes as their new learning environment (Khlaif et al., 2021). Before the implementation of the action plan, students and parents arranged the learning setting in a specific manner to make it more attractive, and parents were asked to supply students with essential tools in case students did not count with them.

Most students already had a quite suitable learning setting that was equipped with a computer, speakers, internet connection, and a camera. However, there was still room for improvement. Apart from a functional microphone, a speaker, and a camera, the basic tools that were established for an appropriate learning setting included good-quality illumination, which students had not even considered as necessary but which later became fundamental for them. Therefore, the researcher provided students with LED lights so they could install them in any arrangement of their preference, making sure they would provide the necessary good-quality illumination in their learning setting at home. The following photo exemplifies how the learning setting was organized and how the LED lights enhance brightness:

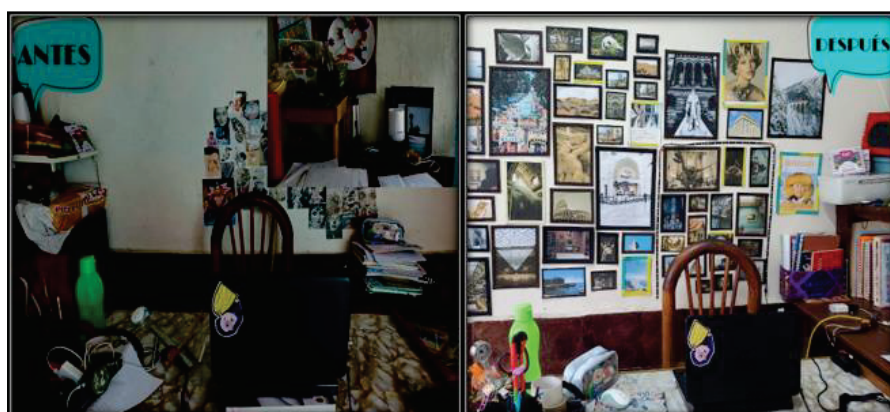


Figure 2. Julieta's physical learning setting; before and after

In addition, students were advised to arrange their learning setting in a way that would look 'inviting' and neat. Students claimed that once their settings were tidied up and well-illuminated, they felt more confident to turn their cameras on and this boosted students not to feel embarrassed anymore. As Alondra shared, when "everything is more organized[,] it motivates you to study more because the space where [you are] is more attractive and nicer". Julieta coincided with Alondra, and added, 'I'm extremely happy because I see everything organized and I can say oh here is this and here is that. It is easier to visually find things.'

As for illumination, having a good-quality indoor brightness is actually more relevant in comparison to other elements in students' environments (Samani, 2012). In the words of Julieta, 'Sometimes, it is very dark in my room, and that kind of makes me feel, physiologically speaking, sleepy, and it makes me want to go to bed.' Understanding the importance of illumination in the students' physical learning setting proved useful in encouraging the participants to engage in their synchronous online lessons. Vanessa pointed out, "the LED light helped me out a lot because with the lights there is more illumination in my room and that makes my face look brighter. This encouraged me to participate a lot more because I did not look funny anymore".

## **Distractors**

Many distractors emerged during the ERT lessons, for instance, outdoor noises, the cell phone, social media, pets, and even parents and other relatives. Immediate surrounding distractors and internet connectivity can deviate learners from fully engaging with the class (Le & Truong, 2021). During the initial stage, it was observed that pets, which were mainly cats, distracted some of the participants from their classes. These pets obstructed the cameras and the visibility of the participants, sometimes making them miss an important explanation or activity instruction. What is more, participants did not do much to avoid this situation.

During the action plan, parents were asked to maintain pets somewhere else from the students' learning setting during their synchronous online lessons so as students could pay close attention without being interrupted. During the interviews in the final stage, students realized that something as simple as not

having their pets around was beneficial because they could focus on the lessons. Jorge, for example, mentioned that he saw his new learning setting as a workplace and nothing else, which encouraged him to participate in class.

Another interesting distractor was associated with family members. Through the initial observations and the interviews, it was discovered that parents constantly interrupted the participants while they were taking their online lessons. Students' parents tended to ask them for favors, such as going to the corner store, answering the door, or other non-academic activities, "sometimes my parents tell me to help them with something, so I just do it" (Roberto). These required students to turn their cameras and microphones off and resulted in deviating students' attention from their classes.

Therefore, parents were asked to respect students' studying time during the action research implementation. Not only did parents stop interrupting their children, they also started monitoring them more closely, which encouraged students to pay more attention to the online classes. Since students had to adopt a new learning setting at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents should learn how to support their children's learning by providing basic tools, and by monitoring their children instead of distracting them (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). It has always been considered of paramount importance to instruct parents to take part in the education of their children because they play a meaningful role in potentializing children's learning process, and this proved to be even more significant during ERT instruction.

## **Conclusion**

This qualitative action research study observed and analyzed students' physical learning setting in order to discover how students' participation was influenced by it. Furthermore, it attempted to improve students' settings to foster participation since it could be observed a lack of student engagement in the ERT lessons. The significance of this study contributes not only to the literature regarding ERT related-research, but also to all research related to future online synchronous learning environments, since the experiences with ERT will one way or another impact how people perceive online teaching and learning (Stewart, 2021).

This study concluded that even for students within a privileged

learning physical context, there are still opportunities for enhancing their learning settings. Findings provide evidence of students requiring better illumination to gain confidence in front of the camera during online synchronous lessons, and then turn on cameras and microphones more willingly, which encouraged a more active participation in ERT lessons and a better interaction with classmates and teacher. Other arrangements to their physical learning setting are also important, such as neat spaces and adding a personal touch to the decoration. This also fostered students' comfort during the ERT lessons, meaning that students were not ashamed of their physical setting, and as result they were eager to turn their cameras on.

Moreover, since students had to arrange their settings along with their parents, learners felt the urge to maintain it clean and tidy, and in this way it was easier for them to find their books, and other materials required for the ERT lessons. Additionally, after arranging their physical settings and assigning a specific area for their ERT lessons, learners created a habit which allowed them to recognize this specific area as a formal learning setting for their learning. As a result students' learning process and attentiveness to classes were enhanced.

Students' emotions also proved to play an important role in this process. It was necessary to dedicate a few minutes at the beginning of the lessons to interact with students and share interests. A simple question such as How are you feeling today? or Did you do anything interesting?, for example, can foster social interaction and self-confidence, making students feel more at ease in turning their cameras and microphones on. From the students' perspective, all learners should turn their cameras on to develop a more engaging environment, which promotes confidence and prevents them from feeling isolated during the ERT, which is essential for their enhancing of social skills. This was particularly important since a negative impact on learners suffering a loss of classroom social engagement due to ERT was observed during the pandemic (Whittle et al., 2020).

As for the distractions in students' physical learning setting, learners are more likely to deviate from the ERT lessons with other activities, such as using the cell phone and checking social media. Admittedly, this type of distractors may also be present in face-to-face contexts, but because of more immediate access, they potentially increase in online learning environments. Moreover, constant interruption from family members emerged as a very

frequent distraction. These distractors have a direct negative impact on students' performance, sometimes meaning they would miss part of the lesson and others that they would miss the point of the whole class. It might sound trivial, and many may take it for granted, but it is of paramount importance that, from now on, when it comes to online synchronous lessons, both teachers and students get prepared by creating a formal learning environment at home.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of the present study was that, as student participation in it was optional, only ten students out of the starting twelve were interviewed in the initial stage, and only seven students out of ten decided to participate in the interviews in the final stage. On the other hand, the data coming from interviews reached saturation in terms of the students' perceptions of physical settings impact on their learning, so this limitation was overcome this way. Another limitation was internet connectivity in that some learners had a constantly unstable internet connection, which made it difficult to record the ERT lessons for further observation. This, however, did not hinder the research process, and instead reinforced this variable as an inevitable negative factor in online learning environments (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Čelić & Dedeić, 2021; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

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## CAPÍTULO 9

Teaching methods to teach Spanish to multilingual foreigners  
at SEJUDEM in Tapachula, Chiapas

Pablo Moreno Arenas  
t170016@unach.mx

Dra. Elsa Yolanda Cruz Maldonado  
yolanda.cruz@unach.mx

Mtro. Adrián de Jesús Girón Chávez  
adrian.giron@unach.mx

Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas

### **Introduction**

Tapachula is located in Chiapas, México. As a border city with Guatemala, this city is considered the southern entrance to Mexico. Particularly in this part of Mexico, there is a massive movement migration, which seems to have increased in the last 5 years. Many foreigners that come to Tapachula have economic issues, violence problems, and gender and sexual orientation discrimination problems, among others, in their home countries. That is the main reason why people decide to migrate; they become refugees, as their main goal is to have a better life in a safe place. Some of these people are looking for the American dream, others just want to stay here in Mexico because they like this country. However, for some people, language is an impediment. The majority of these people have problems when they try to communicate with local people. Refugees cannot even express themselves because they do not know how to do it due to the language barrier.

Learning Spanish as a foreign language is undoubtedly a challenge. It is one of the most difficult languages due to its grammatical verb tenses. Also, the words have different meanings depending on the place where the speaker is living (context). Many foreigners learn the language unconsciously; as a consequence, they conjugate grammatical tenses wrong. Others think that the gender of the words is the same as in their native language because it is similar to some Romance languages. The languages most spoken by refugees living in

Tapachula are French, Portuguese, Creole and English.

As it is mentioned before, sometimes refugees interacting with local people cannot communicate their ideas, opinion and emotions effectively. They try to speak in simple time tenses but they mistakenly conjugate the verb or they use the incorrect nouns. Furthermore, the lack of vocabulary is another problem when they try to transmit their messages. This big barrier between two different societies and cultures, the foreign society and Mexican society, creates disadvantages for refugees. Most of the people in Mexico are monolinguals, speaking one language: Spanish.

Some of the refugees have learned Spanish in other Spanish-speaking countries, such as Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador. However, this also represents a cultural shock for refugees because some words do not even exist in other countries or the meaning of the words can be different depending on the country. They learn slang, colloquial words and expressions from different parts of their journey. Effective communication is sometimes not achieved as the meaning of the words can be different depending on the context.

Nowadays, the English language is considered one of the most important languages because it is the most useful lingua franca around the world. It is the language of global knowledge, science, tourism, entertainment and technology (Crystal, 2003). However, the Spanish language has increased its influence in many countries recently. It is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world due to its territorial extension in Latin America. In addition, in some countries, such as the United States of America, Canada, South Korea, and the European Union, schools offer language courses teaching Spanish as a foreign language. The great diversity that the Spanish language represents in some aspects, such as accents, slang and culture, are some reasons why the language has increased in popularity.

This research is based on one of the writers' personal experiences at the municipal Ministry of Youth and Sports (SEJUDEM, as its initials in Spanish). Spanish classes were taught at SEJUDEM to refugees from countries like Ghana, Congo, Angola, Haiti, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Many of them had different Spanish language levels; some of them were beginners and others have acquired the target language over time. They can be considered at an elementary or intermediate level. The diversity of cultures and languages

can be challenging for Spanish teachers in this context. The main goal of this Spanish course is to include afro-descendant people in society. Due to the complexity of the Spanish language, teaching some topics and aspects of the target language can be considered hard to explain to foreign students. This study can help future educators to understand the different social and cultural contexts that they may find when teaching Spanish to refugees. This study is needed to understand the different areas of teaching, especially in teaching methods for Spanish as Foreign Language (SFL).

Moreover, this study can distinguish factors regarding sociocultural context that can facilitate or hinder the Spanish language learning process and communication in a context in Tapachula, Chiapas. With this in mind, this research can contribute to teachers' knowledge about what kind of methods are suitable for teaching Spanish, exploring the contexts of the learner's language development. With this in mind, this investigation has the following research questions:

- What are the interests and needs of students at SEJUDEM to learn Spanish?
- What are the most effective teaching strategies used to teach Spanish as a foreign language at SEJUDEM?
- How do teaching strategies affect the learning process of Spanish language learners in Tapachula?
- What factors related to teaching strategies can influence the Spanish language learning process at SEJUDEM? (motivation, visual aids, emotional situation, weather, etc).

In order to answer the research questions, this study needs to set general and specific objectives. The main purpose of this study is to identify the accurate teaching strategies that can be used to teach Spanish to foreigners with different sociocultural contexts at SEJUDEM. These are the specific objectives: (1) to identify the needs, characteristics and interests of people learning Spanish at SEJUDEM; (2) to select teaching strategies to teach Spanish to refugees; and (3) to assess the teaching strategies used to teach

Spanish to multilingual students.

## Literature Review

The Spanish language has gotten an important place because it is one of the most spoken languages around the world. The culture that implies learning Spanish is very wide and diverse. Many countries are native Spanish speakers, especially in Latin-American countries (LATAM). Due to the influence of Latin music, like reggaeton, salsa, and cumbia, among others, people from different countries have decided to study Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) or second language (SSL) just for fun.

The influence of the Spanish language around the world is well known. There is a lot of diffusion of Latin culture. Many people fall in love with the Spanish language because of the culture, diversity and expressions that the language possesses. The culture of Spanish-speaking countries influences a lot in the decision to study the language. For this reason, some people have decided to learn the language.

Mexico has a lot of Spanish speakers. It is the country with the most Spanish speakers in the world. It is a big country with multiple diversity and cultures. Sometimes, people associate Latin America just with Mexico. In 2020, Mexico was the third most visited country on the planet (Marina, 2021). Mexico has undoubtedly been a country that has captivated the whole world. Furthermore, many people have decided to migrate to Mexico due to the cultural and gastronomic richness that it possesses. Mexico is a country full of culture and diversity. There is a big difference between the north and the south. The weather, traditions and food change a lot depending on the geographical location. Due to its diversity, people enjoy being in Mexico, as it offers many opportunities. Foreigners are delighted because Mexicans are very friendly and easygoing. People are impressed by everything that Mexico can offer and they decide to stay in Mexico.

Migration is another reason why people decide to study Spanish. All around the world migration has had a great impact lately. One important point is that they mostly want to migrate to the United States and they have to travel almost the entire American continent. Many people choose Spanish-speaking countries to take refuge in since it is easier to obtain a residence there. Some of

these people settle down in Mexico in the end.

The Spanish language is one barrier that people who migrate face on their way. That is why it is necessary to implement teaching methods that can help refugee people and facilitate the learning process of the Spanish language. Making the teaching-learning process easier is one of the priorities in this study. Contribute to the community of educators to obtain better teaching methods in similar contexts.

### Migration

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another. There are many types of migration, such as internal, external, emigration, etc. Immigration is the accurate definition in this study. In simple words, it is moving into a new country. There are many reasons why people migrate, such as economic factors, violence, discrimination, lack of opportunities (education, health & work opportunities), etc. Many of these people migrate in order to get a better life because they cannot achieve it in their native countries.

In this study, it is important to mention the term refugee. "Refugees are people who have fled or suffered war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country" (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). Basically, refugees are forced to move from their home countries while immigrants choose to move. It is very important for refugees and immigrants to learn Spanish as a foreign language if they want to live in Mexico. Even if they are just in Mexico for a short period, they must learn the language in order to survive; some of these people are not aware of this necessity. Communicating within a Spanish-speaking country is very difficult for people who do not speak the language since the majority of Mexicans do not speak another language other than their mother tongue (Spanish).

These refugees have a lot of difficulties in common. One of them is the language barrier. They cannot speak Spanish fluently or accurately. Also, all the participants share the same context; some of them have the same culture and country where they are from. They are facing these difficulties in the same country where they are staying. Many people have the desire to learn the language, but many factors, such as context, culture shock and economic



factors, interfere with their learning process.

Immigrants face many barriers to education, including a lack of identity documents, a lack of educational credentials, legal impediments, unavailability of catch-up programmes, a lack of fluency in the language of the host school, and a lack of financial and other resources to enrol (UNESCO, 2018a).

In Tapachula, Chiapas, there is a big migration movement due to its location on the southern border with Guatemala. All of these immigrants are looking for better opportunities to live, and they come to Mexico intending to go to the United States of America. Sadly, most immigrants do not achieve their goals since they have to face bureaucratic processes to be accepted in the US. The majority of immigrants must find another option where they can stay in other countries, like Mexico, or they just simply die trying to achieve their dream. They do everything in order to obtain what they want, even if their security and health are compromised in the process. This is a shame because many of them are hard-working people trying to get better opportunities. When staying in Mexico, one of the biggest challenges is using Spanish to communicate with the authorities when they have to go to national or international offices to request international refuge. Some organizations, such as ACNUR, COMAR, UNICEF and SAVE THE CHILDREN, have offices in Tapachula and are in charge of this process.

Children of immigrants show decreased attendance and retention in school, and, in some cases higher drop-out rates (UNESCO, 2018a). Longer durations of parental absence are also associated with poorer educational performance, especially among boys, and poorer overall well-being (Lei et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2014).

### Socio-cultural context

There are several theories related to the socio-cultural environment and second language or Foreign Language learning. They explain how the context influences the foreign language learning process. In a perspective where language acquisition is based on cognitivism, Chosmky (1959) explains that humans are born with an automatic perception of language. On the other hand, behaviourism suggests that the process of learning a language is a result of habit

and this reinforces the learning process. Mustafa et al. (2017) offer a clear insight related to behaviourism, as they mention:

Behaviorism (...) suggests that language learning occurs through a series of stimuli and responses and that all learning is the establishment of habit as a result of reinforcement (Aimin, 2013; Skinner, 1948). Skinner (1948) claimed that language is a verbal behavior. Language learners can be made to produce and comprehend language if they are being reinforced to do so. The behaviorists believe that second language learners imitate what they hear and develop habits in the second language by routine practice (Saville-Troike, 2012) (p. 1169)

Routine can promote the language process because it is a survival instinct. It forces the person to start using the language in daily life. It helps the language learning process because it creates meaningful learning for the student. Moreover, the use of language is mandatory in routines because it becomes a necessity for the person. Unconscious knowledge starts to be created because of the routine.

Context is another important factor that is related to the language learning process. Context is a physical space where language takes place. The context in this case is considered a region that has certain characteristics created by culture and language. These two are important because they delimit the setting, situation, circumstances, background, framework of communication and people. Burgo (2017) defines heritage language learners (HLLs) as the ones who have to learn the language and the culture of the people who speak that language at the same time. She explains that:

HLLs have different cultural needs than L2 learners. Carreira (2004) emphasizes the importance of increasing the linguistic self-esteem of HLLs, reinforcing their identities, and reconnecting with their heritage culture. Culture is then explored by HLLs as insiders of the local communities. Potowski and Carreira (2004) recommend offering HLLs the tools to explore cultural practices for academic achievement and progress. (p. 8)

There exists a theory which describes how the sociocultural context is related to the learning process. This approach is influenced by a Vygotskian sociocultural theory of teaching and learning. Vygotsky (1934, as cited in Haenen et al., 2003) talks about this theory as the description of how human cognition is developed by individuals through cultural and social activities with other people, events and objects. It is a collaborative construction of cultural thinking. Social and relationships are important in the development of the language learning process. According to Haenen et al. (2003),

In this perspective the creation of a learning environment can be conceived of as a shared problem space, inviting the students to participate in a process of negotiation and co-construction of knowledge. (p. 246)

In this situation, the context is Tapachula, Chiapas, México. Refugees are forced to use Spanish as a lingua franca because many people in Mexico are monolingual. The context in which they use the language is in their daily lives and their routines, and for satisfying their needs of health, grocery shopping, the use of public transportation, and paperwork in government offices.

### Spanish Language in Mexican Context

The Spanish language is one of the most spoken languages around the world. Only in Mexico, it has many slangs and many different accents. Sometimes when refugees start their journey they stay in Spanish-speaking countries, such as Chile, Dominican Republic, Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, etc. This influences the language learning process because they think the idioms apply to all the countries where Spanish is spoken. This is not true, as all Latin American countries have different cultures and all of them have different language expressions, idioms and slang.

One clear example is the words "tía" and "tío". In Mexico, those words refer to family members while in Chile they are used to refer to teachers or professors. This difference between meanings makes them confused. Additionally, not only in a different country does the language change. Here in Mexico there exists a great diversity between regions, from north to south. One

example of this difference within Mexico is the word "colucho", referring to a person with curly hair. In the south of Mexico, it is very common to hear that word because it is native to Central America. On the other hand, it is an unknown word in the northern part of Mexico, as they use the words "chino" or "rizado" for the same notion. This is one of the most challenging parts of the Spanish language.

### Teaching methods in SFL-ELE

There are a lot of approaches that show the effectiveness of the foreign language process in different classroom contexts. Teachers need to analyze and compare different approaches to a foreign language in order to improve the language teaching technique. These approaches have been changing through time and they are being used nowadays in foreign language classes. The goal consists of creating effective language development for Spanish students. Discovering the best method or combination of methods to obtain effective learning of the Spanish Language. According to Haenen et al. (2003), the teaching methods contribute to the creation of efficient learning environments and to present language in terms of a meaningful whole. This is why teachers need to decide on the most accurate method, depending on students' needs and interests. In foreign language education, the Grammar- Translation model, also known as "the Prussian Method", focuses on word-to-word translation. The objective of this approach is "to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign-language study" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.5). This method can help students to learn vocabulary in very fast way. However, it only focuses on reading and writing skills. The use of this method can represent using more of the mother's tongue than the target language. Teachers can give instructions and explain the rules in the student's native language. The Grammar-Translation Method occasionally creates frustration for students and it makes few demands on teachers.

When teaching Spanish, Grammar Translation can be a method used for teaching vocabulary and basic grammar. Besides, most of the participants are French speakers, a language belonging to the Romance languages as it is Spanish; consequently, sometimes similarities are found in both languages.

However, one problem, in this case, is the gender and number because it can be very different between the two languages. Students unconsciously used this strategy to understand new words or vocabulary and use tools to translate, such as Google Translator, online dictionaries and apps.

The Direct Method is another approach to teaching language. Richards and Rodgers (2001) mention that it was created succeeding the Grammar Translation method in the nineteenth century. It gives a different approach to learning and teaching a foreign language. The method consists of teaching with the use of the target language. When students have interrogations, the teacher must answer using the target language. This explanation must include a combination of words with charades in order to communicate the message without using the student's native language. This is based on the belief that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native tongue if the meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action. Learners will be able to deduce grammar rules by hearing the language in context. The goal of this method is not the translation, it is to help students to be able to communicate in the target language. The important skills in this method are listening and speaking. Body language is very important in order to explain the topics.

Additionally, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 12) highlight some principles and procedures to follow in order to carry out this method:

- Classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language.
- Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught.
- Oral communication skills are built up in organized question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students
- Grammar is taught inductively
- New teaching points are introduced orally
- Concrete vocabulary is taught through demonstration, objects and pictures. Association of ideas.
- Speech and listening comprehension are taught
- Correct pronunciation and grammar is emphasized.

Two more effective language approaches are the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Natural Approach methods, with their origins in the changes in British Language Teaching from the late 1960s (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Language is taught by practical basic structures in situation-based activities. In order to obtain meaningful knowledge, it emphasizes exposing meaning and context. It promotes the exposure of the target language. The main goal is communication and its importance. The Natural Approach focuses on communication as well, but one key difference is that the Communicative Language Teaching approach focuses more on communicative competence, which involves not only communication but the ability to analyze context and know how to vary the use of a language according to the setting and participants (Gurunathan & Geethanjali, 2016). Communicative Language Teaching is similar to the Natural approach. However, the CLT approach focuses more on analyzing context and knowing how to vary the use of a language.

## **Metodología**

This study is based on qualitative research. According to Reyes et al., (2014) a qualitative study is "mainly interested in the participants' point of view concerning the specific or central situation that is meant to be researched". Furthermore, qualitative research has the objective of exploring and analyzing the situation in depth. It is useful for doing complex research. This kind of research helps to describe the context and backgrounds of the participants involved in the variable.

In this situation, the most accurate approach for this study is case study. It is based on the observation and the description of the variable. The data analysis can be of an individual or a group of people. The nature of the research demands obtaining as much information as possible but also it requires understanding and comprehending the situation of the participants.

This investigation is based on the specific case of a Spanish course offered by SEJUDEM. In face-to-face classes, students can practice vocabulary and grammar in order to integrate them into Mexican society. The tenured professor teaches students some daily life vocabulary and grammar, such as fruits and vegetables, days of the week, greetings, the alphabet, colours,

numbers, personal information, family, simple present, simple past, and simple future. The teacher tries different teaching strategies in order to find out the most appropriate for this course. Some of these strategies are brainstorming, demonstration, discussion and the use of different games in order to create meaningful knowledge.

In order to collect accurate information, around ten per cent of 180 students are required to have enough information to carry out this study. Twenty participants are involved in this study. These students are polyglot people. Data collection is going to be collected through the use of surveys. The questions designed for this research are written to discover participants' opinions, perceptions and points of view on how Spanish is learnt through the different use of teaching strategies in Tapachula, Chiapas. Surveys allow for gathering information easily. In this way, the researcher has the opportunity to analyze the answers more freely. The collection of students' opinions can be diverse and this kind of survey is more friendly with the context involved. A survey is the best way to gather more data about this particular situation.

Considering the nature of the study, twenty participants were required to gather enough information. There were twenty students in this class, nineteen from Haiti and one participant from Sierra Leone, Africa. The learners were between 20 and 56 years old. These participants come from different sociocultural contexts. They arrived in Mexico as refugees in the southern part of Mexico, on the border with Guatemala. These participants study at SEJUDEM since they knew the existence of the courses offered by the institution. Some of them have been living in Tapachula for one to three months. They live in Tapachula because it is one of the biggest cities in Chiapas. They want to work to make money so they can continue on their way to the United States. However, other people try to make a living here as they like the hot and humid weather.

The process of gathering information has been developed with the use of semi-structured interviews. Participants answered an interview of fourteen open questions. The instrument was applied inside the institution for a period of approximately two hours. There were two groups involved. The first of eleven and the second of nine. the interview was only conducted in the classroom, with the purpose of not interrupting anyone and avoiding large conglomerates.

Some participants had difficulties answering the questions. They used Google Translator to translate words, others the researcher had to provide a synonym or a direct translation to French. They even helped each other by translating into their native language.

## Results

The results of the applied survey helped to know the participants' opinions, backgrounds and their needs. It helped to know how they liked the language course and it gave feedback about the methods used during to teach Spanish. Next, the answers to the survey questions are presented.

How many languages do you speak? How have you learnt them?

Their answers differ due to their different backgrounds. Most of them learned languages through school. The languages most spoken were Creole, French, Spanish, Portuguese and English. Almost all the participants spoke creole, except for the only student from Sierra Leone. Five students wrote they were just able to speak two languages. Eight Students wrote they were able to speak three languages. Three students wrote they were able to speak four languages. Four students wrote they were able to speak five languages. a quarter of the participants are polyglot people.

Have you been to a country where Spanish is spoken as an official language? Which country and how long did you stay there?

The reason why people started learning Spanish was that they stayed in a Spanish-speaking country and they took courses there in order to survive in that country and also to understand the language for better communication. One participant expressed that their first contact with the Spanish language was in middle school. Seven participants wrote in the survey that they did not stay in a country where the official language is Spanish. However, twelve students confirmed that they stayed in a country where Spanish was the official language.



Five students from the twelve who stayed in a Spanish country started their journey in the Dominican Republic. This is because Haiti shares the island with it. Six of them stayed in Chile for a long time. between 9 years to three months. Four of them wrote they stayed in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico) and South America (Colombia). However, their stays were short (around one month).

Why do you need to learn Spanish?

This question was addressed to know the students' needs. All the participants mentioned that they needed the language in order to communicate efficiently. Also, their primary needs are being affected due to language barriers such as health, education, social interaction, rights, and getting a job. Students needed the language in order to survive in their daily life. Some students answered that they started worrying about learning the language because they realized they needed to speak Spanish in Mexico. They mentioned that Spanish is one of the most spoken around the world.

It is important to mention that some of these people have a technical career and they are looking to work on it. Additionally, some learners are looking to stay in the country. Five of the participants wrote, “To live and work here in Mexico”. We can assume they are sure about staying in Mexico.

In which situations do you need to use Spanish?

In this question, students considered their daily life as a reason why they have to learn the language. Some mentioned situations, such as going to work, buying groceries, going to church, going to school, using public transportation, in general, daily life situations. They highlighted the fact that Spanish is important for having a conversation.

It is important to mention that their stay here in Mexico was important for them because they are looking for a humanitarian visa. They need to communicate with people who can help them but they cannot express

themselves. They look for refuge and protection here in Mexico. Their daily life is based on interviews and paperwork. They usually go to an ONG organization, such as COMAR, ACNUR, SAVE THE CHILDREN, etc. and they guide them through this long process. They wanted to communicate better with the people who helped them.

Have you studied Spanish before? If so, how did you study it?

In this question, students were able to express their background, which is different from each other. Eleven students answered that their first contact with Spanish was at the elementary school in their home country. They mentioned that it is just a basic level. However, six participants mentioned that they did not have any contact with the target language before. Two students mentioned that they were autodidactic. They preferred to watch videos on YouTube. Also, one of them practised speaking with Spanish native speakers.

Why do you want to learn Spanish? What motivates you to keep studying it?

This question presented diverse answers from the participants. The goal of this question was to obtain information about their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

One reason why refugees want to continue studying Spanish was related to education. They wanted to continue studying because they want to live in Mexico. They mentioned that they wanted to complete an undergraduate program at a university. Also, some of them wanted to improve their pronunciation. Learners mentioned that they wanted to continue studying because they liked Spanish and the culture that it represents.

Likewise, another reason why they wanted to continue studying the target language was that they liked the way their Spanish classes were taught. They said that the extrinsic motivation from teachers has helped them to continue learning Spanish. Also, some of them mentioned that it is important to learn the official language in Mexico because they were living in it and their

daily life forced them to learn.

Many of the participants are looking for working opportunities in different areas. They mentioned that it was important to learn the language in order to communicate with their coworkers. One student mentioned that he wanted to work in the tourism sector here in Mexico. Besides, they mentioned they are looking for better living opportunities for their children. They wanted to have a better life in a new country.

How have you felt in your Spanish classes? Why?

Participants answered this question positively. Most of them wrote in their papers some good characteristics about the Spanish classes, such as joyful, nice, enjoyable, interesting, and perfect. They really liked the methodology used in classes. They described in their answers that it was about 50% theory and 50% practice, which is common in communicative approach courses.

Also, they described the professors involved in the teaching process. They liked the way teachers motivated their students. They liked the way educators encouraged students to participate in class. Also, they said they wanted to talk in all classes because they felt comfortable. Participants described instructors as prompters.

Have the Spanish classes helped you to communicate and fit in more effectively here in Tapachula? Why?

In this question, 100% of the participants agreed that the classes helped them in their daily life in Tapachula. Some of them said that they were able to use the target language in important moments, such as paying for a taxi, going to the market, doing paperwork, going shopping, etc. They mentioned they could communicate with local people. Also, they said it is almost mandatory to speak Spanish in these places. Furthermore, students mentioned that they learnt some idioms, slang and expressions in their classes that can help them understand people in Tapachula and communicate their ideas more effectively in everyday activities and even in government processes. All of this has helped

them fit in the society of Tapachula.

## Conclusion

The population of Tapachula, Chiapas, a small city located in the southern borderline with Guatemala, has changed dramatically since 2018. According to SEJUVEM, large caravans with thousands of immigrants have arrived at this city looking for a permit that will allow them to transport themselves in Mexico to get to the northern borderline with the United States. Some other immigrants are considered refugees, as they migrated to Mexico because they were forced to leave their home countries, since they suffer economic problems, violence, death threats, and discrimination, among other problems. These refugees look for a special permit that allows them to stay in Mexico.

All these immigrants come from different countries, such as Haiti, Cameroon, Eritrea, Yemen, Sierra Leone, Congo, Ghana, and some other African countries. All this diversity of backgrounds has caused a language barrier between the immigrants and local people of Tapachula, since the former do not speak Spanish effectively or, in some cases, they do not speak it at all. This is the context in which there is an urgent need to teach Spanish as a foreign language to these immigrants for them to be able to communicate their needs to the corresponding migration authorities, and even for them to interact with the local population in Tapachula, engaged in activities such as commerce and health issues, for instance.

Given this context, and supported by the preliminary results of this research, it can be affirmed that the most suitable teaching methods to teach Spanish as a foreign language to multilingual immigrants with diverse backgrounds are the communicative approach and the use of ludic activities. The context in which these immigrants are learning Spanish can be called immersive since they are forced to interact with Spanish native speakers all the time. Most of them prefer to avoid communication with the local people, but when they need to buy groceries, go to a doctor due to health problems, or talk to government workers in migration offices to obtain their special permits, they face the language barrier and they struggle to communicate their ideas. This is why they must learn Spanish as fast as they can, and the communicative

approach suits their needs within this educational context.

The communicative approach is very effective in this immersive context. Immigrants are constantly exposed to Spanish all the time, and they can interact with native speakers at any time. These students need to learn vocabulary and phrases in the target language that can help them engage in conversations with local people effectively to satisfy their immediate, basic needs. These students prefer to learn phrases in Spanish that can be useful in the following social interactions:

- Asking and giving information
- Shopping for groceries, clothes, medications, etc.
- Seeing a doctor due to health problems
- Filling out official forms in migration offices
- Using public transportation
- Finding a house or apartment to rent
- Finding a job
- Everyday interactions with local people

Under the communicative approach, immigrants learn useful vocabulary and phrases, practice the target language in the classroom in simulated social situations, and interact with their classmates or teachers, learning both the meaning, the spelling, the pronunciation, and the communicative purpose of the phrases they learn. With this practice, these students feel more confident to interact with local people and they try to communicate effectively. The advantage of being in an immersive context in which they are exposed to a foreign language all the time is that they also learn vocabulary and phrases outside the classroom, and they bring their doubts to the class and ask their teachers about them, reinforcing the language they learnt in real social interaction.

Moreover, another effective teaching strategy to teach Spanish to immigrants with different backgrounds and mother tongues is the use of ludic activities. Using games has proved to make the class more dynamic. They do

not like a class in which they listen to the teacher all the time. They like to practice the language through games. For example, they use the vocabulary seen in class in phrases in a 20-question game, where they have only 20 chances to ask for information to guess a profession, a vegetable or fruit, or any other item of vocabulary seen in class.

Having games in the language class has several advantages. The biggest one is that it motivates students to continue coming to class to learn Spanish. They like the games and the dynamic classes and they do not miss any sessions. Attendance is constant in these classes. Another advantage is that games allow students to interact with their classmates in Spanish, which gives them more opportunities to practice the target language in class, making mistakes and being corrected so they do it effectively next time they are in a similar situation outside the classroom. This practice is very important to language learning as they solve their doubts and learn useful phrases that can be put into real conversations with the local people.

Another advantage of using ludic activities in the language classroom is the friendly learning environment that is built as a result. Since everyone in the class participates, all students enjoy the classes and the learning environment becomes friendly and safe to learn Spanish. Students trust their professors and ask questions all the time about what they have experienced outside the classroom. They also seem to be very motivated to learn Spanish in this way, as they think it is the fastest and best way to learn words and phrases that they can use in real social engagements.

Finally, using both the communicative approach and ludic activities is the best way to meet the students' learning needs and learning styles. Most of them seem to be kinesthetic, so they do not like to stay sitting all the time in class, and are always ready to participate in games and competitions. Their main language need is to be able to communicate their ideas effectively, this is why the communicative approach is the most suitable teaching method to teach Spanish to a class of multilingual immigrants with diverse cultural backgrounds at SEJUVEM in Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico.

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## CAPÍTULO 10

### Teaching practices that promote autonomous learning

Secundino Isabeles Flores  
secundino@ucol.mx  
Universidad de Colima  
María Magdalena Cass Zubiría  
mcass@ucol.mx  
Universidad de Colima  
Raphaël Hubert Elie Sebire  
raphael\_elie@ucol.mx  
Universidad de Colima

#### **Introduction**

The use of autonomous learning has grown lately in different areas of knowledge, especially in language learning (Al-Busaidi & Al-Maamari, 2014; Pershukova et al., 2020). This has caused teachers and researchers to become more interested in learning about what can be done to introduce this approach (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2020; Morbedadze, 2015). Inquiring how to promote autonomous learning in different contexts and among students from different social and cultural backgrounds is one of the main concerns researchers have (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019). The purpose of this investigation was to know what the English teachers from the School of Languages have done to foster autonomous language learning in their classes. The research question of this investigation was, which practices did English teachers at the School of Languages from the University of Colima implement during the spring semester 2022 to foster autonomous English as a foreign language learning? Data was collected through participant interviews to answer this question. The results indicate that teachers implemented different autonomous language learning practices in their classrooms. It was also found that these practices mainly focus on having students develop their EFL competence, practising the topics they had learnt in class, and involving learners in the decisions made regarding their assessment.



## Literature Review

Autonomous learning has been defined as giving students control of their learning throughout this process (Holec, 1981; Lengkanawati, 2017). Nevertheless, Cotteral (2000) contends that this approach allows students to take charge of some aspects of their learning at different stages of their learning. This means, students are not expected to take full responsibility at once but to do it gradually. This is why Hand (2006) affirms that autonomous learning is not a product but a process. Benson (2011) explains that autonomous learning allows students to make their own decisions regarding their learning goals and how to achieve them, as well as to monitor and assess their learning. Murray (2006) explains that this type of learning involves interaction among learners to reach their goals, it is not done in isolation, which is a common misunderstanding of what autonomous learning is.

The benefits of autonomous learning have supported its introduction and promotion. One of them is the development of skills that assist students to be interested in learning throughout their lives (Benson, 2016). Furthermore, autonomous learning contributes to making students responsible for their learning (Dam, 2012; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). This happens not only while they are in school but also outside (Al-Busaidi & Al-Maamari, 2014). This happens because learners are allowed to make decisions regarding their learning (Darsih, 2018). According to the results of a study conducted by Zulaihah and Harida (2017), students take control of how fast they learn in autonomous learning, which helps to develop independence in their learning. Similar findings were obtained from the investigation done by Boggu and Sundarsingh (2019), who discovered that after students had learnt through autonomous learning, they considered themselves independent and took more responsibility for their learning. Moreover, it has been found that learning improves when students learn with this approach. Wejira (2019) explains that this happens because students are given the opportunity to select their learning goals, they learn according to their preferences, and have a say regarding how they learn. Al-Busaidi (2012) states that when students are allowed to make their own decisions they can significantly increase their language development. Oxford (2003) contends that academic success and autonomous learning are connected. The more autonomous students become the more successful they are according to Sakrak-Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019). The findings that emerged

from a study conducted by Hu and Zhang (2017) confirm the previous. The results showed that there was a connection between the development of autonomous learning and the development of students' EFL skills.

#### Practices used to foster autonomous learning

Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) indicate that autonomous learning can be fostered by having students work on their own and making them take responsibility for their learning. Keuk and Heng (2016) suggest the use of task-based learning because this approach gives learners the opportunity to make some choices about their learning and work independently. The results of a study conducted by Intraboonsom et al. (2020) showed that the teacher practices employed to foster autonomous learning were the following. They divided them into the four dimensions of autonomy:

#### Technical

- Helping or encouraging students to monitor their own progress
- Helping students make predictions (e.g. using context clues, part of speech, subject-verb agreement, and knowledge of the topic)
- Suggesting additional learning resources (e.g. vocabulary lists, websites, dictionaries)
- Suggesting students to use remembering strategies (p.199)

#### Political

- Allowing students to choose topics or negotiate deadlines for assignments
- Allowing students to negotiate classroom rules
- Allowing students to express whether they like or dislike the class and its activities (p.199)

### Psychological

- Encouraging students to work outside of class
- Raising students' awareness of their own proficiency levels
- Raising students' awareness of the purpose of a task and what it requires
- Encouraging students to overcome their fear of making mistakes
- Encouraging students to give moral support to their friends for the work they have done (p.199)

### Sociocultural

- Encouraging students to read and interact with friends through their online diary (p.199)

Other practices that can be employed to foster autonomous learning are the use of pair and group work, letting students choose the activities to be done in the classroom, and including tasks that promote collaboration among classmates (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Parrish (2020) suggests involving students in setting and selecting the learning goals, asking them to self-assess their progress based on the goals selected, giving learners options regarding what they can do to learn and which materials they can use, using the content they generate in class, encouraging them to gradually take responsibility of their learning, implementing practices that foster independent learning, and motivating learners to take risks in their language learning.

Other practices include using examples from real life in the classroom, having students select the topics they want to learn in future classes, keeping a learning log where students can reflect on their learning and what can be done to enhance it, involving students in the selection of task guidelines and the construction of assessing rubrics, trying to increase learners' intrinsic motivation by asking them their learning preferences and plan lesson considering them, providing plenty of scaffolding when students are first asked to learn by themselves and gradually removing it as they become more autonomous, having students select the tasks and assignments they want to submit, and involving students in the selection of assessment instruments according to their professional contexts (Suif-Ojeda, 2018).

## Methodology

### Objective

The purpose of this study was to investigate the practices English teachers at the School of Languages from the University of Colima implemented during the spring semester of 2022 to promote autonomous English as a foreign language learning.

### Research question

Which practices did English teachers at the School of Languages from the University of Colima implement during the spring semester of 2022 to foster autonomous English as a foreign language learning?

A qualitative approach was used in this research because it helped the researcher get a full understanding of the topic being investigated (Creswell, 2013). This author affirms that the previous is achieved by asking the participants about the issues the researcher wants to learn more about. In addition, qualitative research was appropriate because it is done in real-world contexts (Creswell, 2013; Ritchie et al., 2013). This investigation was conducted in the researchers' teaching context to explore what students did to foster autonomous language learning in their classes. Another feature of this type of research was its open-ended plan and flexibility. Research questions can be changed according to the data collected and the findings that emerge (Draper, 2004). The researchers did not know the findings they could obtain; thus, using qualitative research would enable them to make changes in case it was required once the data was gathered.

This was a case study research because it focused on explaining how a social phenomenon works by providing a deep description of the same (Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2014) but at the same time "retaining a holistic and real-world perspective" (Yin, 2018, p. 35). Hence, this type of research helped to obtain experiential knowledge from the participants (Stake, 2005) and be able to shed some light on the studied phenomenon (Gerring, 2017). Thus, the researchers became the "primary instrument of data collection and analysis"

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37).

### Context

The latest educational policies of the University of Colima suggest the use of teaching approaches that are student-centered, having students construct their own knowledge and learn how to learn at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels (Universidad de Colima, 2017). Considering this, the English teachers from the School of Languages of this university agreed to implement teaching practices that promoted autonomous language learning during the spring semester of 2022. Students at this school take English classes according to their foreign language level. These go from B1 to C1. There are between 12 to 28 students in each class. It was not established which practices had to be implemented to foster autonomous learning. Each teacher was allowed to decide what to do based on the EFL level of their students, the number of learners they had in the English class, their EFL needs, characteristics and abilities of learners, as well as teachers' experience, knowledge, and mastery of autonomous learning.

### Participants

The participants were five Mexican English teachers. They are between 26 and 52 years old. Their teaching experience varied from 8 to 25 years. Their EFL proficiency levels were C1 and C2. Some of them had more knowledge and experience regarding learning autonomously and implementing teaching practices that promote this type of learning. They were enthusiastic teachers that were truly interested in helping their students develop their EFL skills. Although the participants had different levels of expertise in autonomous learning, they welcomed the idea of implementing practices to promote this approach to learning.

### Data collection instrument

Information from participants was collected through semi-structured interviews. These were employed because they allowed gathering data directly from participants (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, by using interviews teachers

were able to talk about their opinions, experiences, feelings, and preferences about the issues they were asked about (Descombe, 2014; Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Open questions were asked during the interview. Descombe (2014) explains that "the advantage of open questions is that the information gathered by way of the responses is more likely to reflect the full richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent" (p. 165). Moreover, when such questions are employed, participants can select the length of their responses, and the issues they want to address or emphasize (Dörnyei, 2003). This was vital in this investigation because the data to be collected depended completely on what participants wanted to say regarding the practices they had implemented.

#### Data collection process

Towards the end of the spring semester English teachers at the School of Languages were contacted to ask them if they were willing to participate in this investigation. They were explained what their participation involved, approximately how long the interview was going to take, and how the information they provided was going to be used. They were told their names would be kept secret and aliases would be used if the information were to be presented at a teachers' conference or in a publication. Five out of eight teachers agreed to be interviewed. They were asked when it would be convenient to be interviewed. Each of them informed the researchers of the day and time when they were available. Each participant was interviewed in their office. Permission to record the interviews was requested from each participant, which they all granted. One of the researchers conducted all the interviews, asking the same questions, although in some cases follow-up questions were asked depending on what each participant said. Each interview lasted between 18 and 25 minutes.

#### Data analysis method

Coding was employed to analyze the data collected because it helps to organize it, understand it (Basil, 2003), and it is possible to create categories as the information is being analyzed (Pope et al., 2000). The latter happened during the data analysis in this investigation. Moreover, coding was used because it has a clear process for analysing data. The steps it follows are

transcribing interviews, separating and organizing the information, reading through it, coding it by hand or computer, finding themes, interrelating themes, and interpreting the meaning of themes (Creswell, 2013). All the researchers participated in the data analysis. The coding of the data was done by each researcher individually, they then compared their codes to establish which would be kept, merged, or changed. The same process was done to find the themes. The interrelation and interpretation of these were done by all the researchers working in collaboration.

## Results

It was found that teachers employed different practices to promote autonomous learning. These were related mainly to three different areas: EFL learning, EFL practice, and assessment.

### Language Learning

One of the teachers gave students options to have them work on their language skills individually each week. Students had to read a book of their choosing, and then by the end of the week, they had to either write a book report or do a podcast to talk about what they had read. They could do only podcasts, only reports, or mix them as they wished. By having students read, write and or talk it was expected that they would improve these language skills. Another teacher did something similar. The options her students were given were working with a song, reading a book, watching a TV series, or reading a recipe and cook. If they chose a song, they had to describe it and talk about it and the singer.

Regarding the book, they had to discuss what happened in the chapters they read. If watching a TV series was selected, they had to discuss what it was about and the characters. If they selected the recipe, they had to follow it to cook the food, and then talk about how good it was. In addition, they had to write at least three new words, define them and explain whether they like whichever option they had selected and why or why not. This was done weekly. These practices match the strategies suggested by Intraboonsom et al. (2020), who indicate that giving students choices when learning helps to promote autonomous learning.

The students from a different class were asked to reflect on the language skill or areas of knowledge they considered their weakest. They then selected one aspect of their EFL proficiency they wanted to work on each week to improve it. They had to do an action plan in which they stated what they were going to do weekly. During the week, learners did whatever they had planned and were required to submit evidence of the work done. Some of the aspects students developed were fluency, pronunciation, reading and listening comprehension, and vocabulary mainly. Self-study guides were employed by another teacher to have students learn specific topics or work on language skills on their own. These guides also included some tasks to be completed. Students were then given the answer key to self-check their answers in the tasks given. They decided whether they corrected their mistakes or only noticed what they did wrong. The teacher kept a record of the study guides they had completed. All the students work on the same study guide at the same time. These practices made students learn independently, which is suggested to foster autonomous learning (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019).

Teachers also employed learner-centered approaches to have students learn different topics. Two teachers used cooperative learning activities to learn grammar topics, more specifically jigsaw learning. While students were learning the topics they were going to teach, teachers monitored them and answered any questions they had, making sure they understood the grammar topics. After that, they taught and learnt from each other and completed some practice activities which were checked by the team who taught such topics. Two other teachers used flipped classroom to have students learn vocabulary and grammar topics. They provided learners with the materials or resources and instructions needed to learn such topics on their own at home. When they met in the classroom, questions were answered by the teacher. If students did not have any questions or few, the teacher asked students questions to make sure each topic was learnt. Students were then given a task to apply what they had learnt. These practices contributed to developing learner autonomy because they made students less dependent on the teacher to learn (Keuk & Heng, 2016) and had them learn in collaboration with their peers (Borg & AL-Busaidi, 2012).

Language practice

One of the participants allowed students to decide the pace they worked



at to complete activities from the learning platform the book they were using gave them access to. Each week the teacher gave students a list of activities they had to do in the online platform to practice the topics that had been learnt in class. Students decided when they did them, how quickly they completed them, and how much they spent in doing so. The teacher could get a report from the platform to know whether students had completed all the activities or how many, how many attempts it took them to do so, and how long they spent working on it. Another participant did something similar. She had students work independently on the activities from the workbook. Students were given a deadline to finish these activities. According to their time availability, learners worked on these activities and submitted them when they were done with them so that the teacher could check their work. Another teacher let students select the activities they did to practice the vocabulary learnt in class. After going over new words and working with them in class, students were told they had to select a task of their choosing to review these words. The tasks students did were writing the words, their meaning, and an example of each; memory games; graphic organizers with the words; and sentences using each word. These practices included one of the principles of autonomous learning mentioned by Parrish (2020), who affirms that this approach to learning requires student involvement in the decisions made regarding their learning.

### Assessment

Students in one class were involved in the selection of deadlines for some tasks and activities. To prevent procrastination, the teacher provided them with some dates for students to show her the progress they had made; however, this was not mandatory so not all the students met these deadlines, but they were not penalized for not doing so. The students that did, were grateful because such dates motivated them to work regularly. Another teacher gave students the opportunity to take mock exams to self-assess themselves according to a standardized test and monitor their progress. This was voluntary and although at the beginning of the semester, few students took these tests, at the end of it most of them took them. Finally, students in two classes were involved in the selection of a part of the assessment criteria. When this happened, they did not have to agree as a class on the value of certain assignments, each student chose the worth of such assignments. Lengkanawati (2017) contends that

autonomous learning involves students in every aspect of their learning, including assessment. These practices match this view and that of Suif-Ojeda (2018) who states that students should be allowed to take part in the decisions made regarding their learning.

#### Other practices

Four of the participants mentioned they conducted awareness-raising activities to help students become conscious of their language strengths and weaknesses, their learning preferences, and their learning styles. They declared this was necessary to be able to choose the aspects of their EFL learning they were going to develop when they were given the freedom to do so. Awareness raising is a vital aspect of autonomous learning because it helps students become conscious of different aspects regarding themselves and their learning (Reinders, 2010) to be able to make better decisions about themselves when they are given the freedom to learn on their own (Darsih, 2018; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). One of the teachers said she helped learners with time management. She showed them how they could organize their time better to be able to comply with the requirements of their EFL class and other ones they were taking. Finally, all the participants affirmed they did different activities to have them reflect on their learning. They stated this was essential because it could help them identify what was helping them learn, what was not, and what changes they needed to make to enhance their language learning. Different researchers agree that having students reflect on their learning is essential in autonomous learning (Reinders, 2010; Scharle & Szabo, 2000; Tassinari, 2018).

#### Conclusions

Teachers implemented practices that seemed to promote autonomous learning. The level of autonomy students had in their learning through these practices varied from one class to another. They allowed students to make some decisions regarding their learning either by choosing one of the options given, deciding the pace they learnt at, selecting the aspects of their language learning they wanted to improve, the tasks they were going to submit, and when they were going to submit some assignments. In addition, students were given

control of some of their learning by having them learn through self-study guides, choosing the aspect of their language development they wanted to improve, or through the teaching approaches employed. Students were not fully learning autonomously; nevertheless, the practices teachers used contributed to introducing this approach, which is the beginning of the process of becoming autonomous (Hand, 2006). This study is relevant because its findings can be useful for teachers who are interested in introducing autonomous learning in their classrooms. The results provide some teaching practices that had been implemented and seemed to have helped to foster this type of learning. A teacher who does not know what to do to foster autonomous learning can adopt some of these practices or adapt them to fit the context where they teach.

#### Limitations and future research

The purpose of this investigation was only to know the practices teachers used to foster autonomous learning. However, there is so much more to learn about autonomous learning in the context where this research was conducted and in many more around the world. Future research can be carried out to see how students feel about learning through them, what aspect of EFL learning each practice develops, and which other skills students develop from learning through these practices, just to mention a few.

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## CAPÍTULO 11

The regulation of plurilingual education in Brazil:  
first impressions on the national curricular guidelines

Fernanda Seidel Bortolotti  
fernanda.borto@gmail.com

Cibele Krause-Lemke  
cklemke@unicentro.br

Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste

### Introduction

In a country with such geographic and historical diversity, countless cultural perspectives have developed and are still developing, however, educational and linguistic policies have not always managed or tried to keep up with these characteristics. An example of what was left behind with this carelessness is the traditions of countless immigrants who left their homelands to come to Brazil — a carelessness that is also perceived as disrespect by some. Altenhofen (2004) states that, instead of the maintenance of family heritage, policies that alternated between indifference to the mother tongue and the imposition of Portuguese were implemented (especially knowledge of writing) as a form of stabilization and social ascension. From another angle, on the margins of most Brazilian borders, some countries have Spanish as their official language, some of which still integrate, along with Brazil, the Southern Common Market (Mercosul), which, since its foundation, has encouraged the teaching of this language on Brazilian soil (Jacumasso et al., 2010). Although Spanish has been the target of threats by national and state policies - such as the approval of Law no. 13,415, which reforms high school (HS) (Brasil, 2017a), reducing the teaching of languages at this educational stage to merely a possibility. Such language exclusions would be more related to the political-economic sphere than to educational and linguistic interests since it is understood that plurilingualism should gain strength and that there is space for a diversity of languages in this territory (Krause-Lemke, 2016; Silva, 2018).

In fact, the space for linguistic diversity in Brazilian lands is not



something to be conquered but reconquered and strengthened. A few years ago, Oliveira et al. (2000) estimated the existence of approximately 200 languages in use in Brazil, of which 30 were immigrants' and another 170 were used by indigenous people, who are usually erased by the history of oppression they experienced in their own country. These numbers — which ideally would be preserved or changed too little up to the present day through effective language policies — reveal that monolingualism is far from representing Brazil.

In between, there is English language (EL) as a compulsory subject from the 6th grade on. For children in public schools in general, this contact is the first formal approach to language study; even though it is a long-standing acquaintance for many enrolled in the private network, with a considerable weekly workload. Thus, despite the relative consolidation of this education, there are still numerous advances needed, especially in terms of the democratization of the offer to all public. Besides the expansion of opportunities for public education, regulation from the early stages of education (including the private sector) and teacher training aligned to the new trends are required.

Therefore, given the recurring requests received by the National Council of Education (Conselho Nacional de Educação, CNE) regarding plurilingual education, not only regarding the teaching of EL and foreign languages in general, but also the languages of indigenous, deaf people, immigrants, and border regions — this Council and the Chamber of Basic Education (Câmara de educação básica, CEB) assigned counselors to make a committee analyze and regulate bilingual schools, schools with extended hours, and international schools. To this end, this group prepared a report, which, when approved by Opinion no. 2 CNE/CEB (Brasil, 2020), served as the basis for the drafting of the National Curricular Guidelines for Plurilingual Education (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais Para a Educação Plurilíngue, DCNEP), assembled in a Resolution Project, which awaits processing. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to outline first impressions regarding the DCNEP, emphasizing how they impact the teaching of EL, particularly, and to what extent they impact the other languages. However, it is understood that before directing attention to the DCNEP, one should first contemplate the robust report prepared with the intention of grounding them.

## The report

The CNE has a federal attribution for the elaboration of the Brazilian Curricular Guidelines, as explained in the Law of Basic Directives of the National Education (Lei de Diretrizes Bases da Educação Nacional, LDB) (Brasil, 1996) and the Law no. 9.131 (Brasil, 1995) regarding the responsibilities of the CEB. However, in the face of the accentuated growth of bilingual institutions, the CNE indicated the need for the composition of a specific commission to study plurilingual education. The group that presented itself before the Chamber was approved as recently as 2019, with councilors, chair, rapporteur, and members. However, the final work recorded in 2020 actually relied on numerous external contributions, an effort acknowledged by the authors themselves. Throughout the writing of the report, several specialists, scholars, indigenous populations, deaf populations, third sector agents, public and private higher education institutions were heard (Brasil, 2020).

As a result, we obtained the base report for the writing of the DCNEP Project (Brasil, 2020), a document distributed in three main sections, starting with the "History" of the populations involved: the indigenous people, the deaf people, and the inhabitants of border regions. In the report, the peoples are supported in their linguistic rights by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ONU, 1948), Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights (Universidade de Friburgo, 1977), Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), Declaration of Salamanca (ONU, 1994), Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1996), Law no. 10.436 (Brasil, 2002), Decree no. 5.626 (Brasil, 2005), and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ONU, 2007).

Indigenous people are remembered sometimes as monolingual, at other times as bilingual and even plurilingual, in the latter case because they also fit in as inhabitants of border regions, where foreign languages are part of their daily lives. Other contexts illustrate the linguistic complexity of this country, which registers the existence of sign languages such as Kaapor (LSKB) of the indigenous deaf population — not counting the regional variants of the Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) (Brasil, 2020).

Libras is welcomed and supported by the commission as an intangible heritage worthy of preservation, encouraging the struggle of the deaf for the

implementation of policies that effectively establish this language as their first language and Portuguese as an additional language (AL) in the written modality. The panelists explain that, while the guidelines for the deaf do not materialize, the DCNEP will momentarily occupy such a position (Brasil, 2020). For that reason, the prepared report and the DCNEP itself have the mission to position Libras as central to education for this population (Brasil, 2020).

Many realities reveal that, in practice, educational institutions have already been facing classrooms with linguistic diversity. Mercosul can be understood as one of the examples of the materialization of the notion of a close relationship between certain South American countries. With its foundation, other policies were stimulated, such as the Joint Declaration of Brasilia for the Strengthening of Regional Integration (Brasil-Argentina, 2003) that initiated the Mercosul Bilingual Intercultural Border Schools Program (Brasil, 2020).

Besides the notion of interculturality between the Portuguese and Spanish languages, the idea of a South American economic bloc has also strengthened ties with the French language. French Guiana, as a neighboring territory, would not be the only motivation for the French-speaking influence in the lives of Brazilians, but also the cultural and ethnic indicators of the Africans (sometimes from French-speaking countries) who came to Brazil. In the case of foreigners who came to Brazil, although it has not been assigned extensive space exclusively for the languages of immigrants, whether Asians, Europeans, or Africans, the report notes the considerable presence of languages from the latter continent, which were lost, among other reasons, due to issues imbricated in the enslavement of their users (Brasil, 2020).

There is even a debate about refugees due to the growing number of applications that have accumulated over the years. In order of magnitude, the largest numbers are undoubtedly from Venezuela and then from countries like Haiti, Cuba, China, Bangladesh, Angola, Senegal, Syria, India, and others. The committee believes that the greatest repercussions of these migratory movements will fall on public schools, bringing plurilingualism to the fore and challenging professionals. As an ally, translanguaging pedagogy (Garcia, 2009) is suggested because of its welcoming potential, which, on the one hand, seeks to teach the local language to a foreigner as a way to include him/her in the society life of the destination country, and, on the other hand, esteems and

preserves the language that the refugee brings with them. As a result, this approach would promote mutual respect through the legitimization of linguistic repertoires, understanding languages as a vehicle for knowledge of cultures, of the human trajectory on earth, and of the world as a whole (Brasil, 2020).

In general lines, the commission tried to report in section one the historical aspects that are indispensable to think about the educational and linguistic future of Brazilians, reinforcing that "if in the past we walked through paths shaded by the silencing of languages and cultures, seeking the exclusivity of the Portuguese language, it is time to move towards educational policies that value, respect, and unite the cultural and linguistic diversity of Brazil (...)" (Brasil, 2020, p. 4, our translation).

The second section is entitled "**Analysis**" and is divided into five sub-sections: on the legal foundations; bilingualism and plurilingualism; bilingual education in Latin America; plurilingual education in Brazil; and the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, BNCC). Beginning with the legal foundations, the authors bring together Decrees, Resolutions, Opinions, and even the Federal Constitutions in their various versions to present the timeline of education in Brazil, particularly linguistics. Old concerns of the state with the maintenance of the historical heritage are pointed out, the communication between generations and distinct regions of the territory, a longing that led to the great deposit of expectations in the Portuguese language to unify the nation. From another angle, the expansion of the demand and supply of education in various ALs is revealed due to the perception of its relevance in terms of cultural increment and future job opportunities (Brasil, 2020).

However, the value that the ALs begin to receive is not transformed into a homogeneous and democratic offer, gaining visibility in private schools but not necessarily in the public ones, which attend 80% of the basic education students in Brazil. Higher class families start to graduate their children with considerable levels of proficiency in at least one foreign language, EL, in most cases, a level of training that graduates from other schools do not usually follow (Brasil, 2020).

The central issue of this educational inequality is, in fact, a deepening of already known weaknesses, and the DCNEP emerges as a resource to fight for educational rights in language and cultural learning for all. Far from

restricting itself to promises of better job placement, the report ratifies:

...the cognitive, economic, and social benefits of bilingual/plurilingual education - a greater development of metalinguistic awareness (by perceiving the arbitrariness between sounds and writing), expansion of the capacity for abstraction and analytical thinking, greater ability to develop creativity; increased social and economic gains; assimilation of different cultural values and, consequently, greater tolerance of difference and human rights. (Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Carmel et al., 2013; Bialystok, 2001 as cited in Brasil, 2020, p. 14, our translation)

The previous excerpt shows that teaching AL would be the path to tolerance, respect, peace, and unity — instead of the opposite movement towards segregation. The next subsection, bilingualism and plurilingualism, also reinforces this aspect. By starting to expose the changes that this field of knowledge has undergone over the years, the reporters show that the bilingual is no longer defined as one with linguistic competence along the lines of a native speaker as Haugen (1953) believed they should be. He came to be conceived as someone who was able to communicate in more than one language — perhaps not exactly with the accent of some reference countries, such as the American one for EL, but as someone who, above all, could make himself understood and express his thoughts. Another definition revised from the development of studies was that of Bloomfield (1933), a bilingual is not like two monolinguals because he takes on broader capacities and characteristics, which do not boil down to this summation.

Other concepts were built with the research (Brasil, 2020), such as those related to the temporal process of acquisition, that is, consecutive bilingualism (when one language is learned before the other) and simultaneous bilingualism (in the case of parallel learning). With regard to the quality of the speaker's production, balanced bilingualism (would involve balancing the languages) and dominant bilingualism (would indicate one of the languages in prominence). Regarding the value of languages, they could still be classified as additive (when both have the same importance) and subtractive (when one replaces the other). Numerous controversies remain, which should not necessarily motivate scholars in the field to conduct exhaustive literature reviews since this phenomenon cannot be limited to something that can be exhausted (Megale, 2019). Plurilingual education is now outlined as a

process marked by:

...uniqueness of learning experiences, times, and stimuli at each stage of language development. These included the functions of each curricular component, such as sentence structures, sentences, discourse; the everyday uses of language; the specifics of the academic language of the disciplines and their requirements, modes of reasoning and formulations. Likewise, the need to take into account the subjects of learning and the connections, facilities and difficulties arising from the proximity or distance between the additional language and the first language, as well as the cultural and social aspects involved. (Brasil, 2020, p. 15, our translation)

With this excerpt, the presence of other languages in the lessons of a target language is introduced and magnified, an aspect that the panelists again advocate on the grounds that an additional language can enhance the knowledge of the first language and vice versa. Finally, the requirement to adapt pedagogical practices to different contexts (as a way of maintaining the singular) does not invalidate, however, the urgency for methodological standards and educational policies — as long as they are in line with elementary aspects of the quotation extracted from the report (Brasil, 2020).

The need to create different strategies, programs, and investments adds to the need for up-to-date teaching models, as the traditional ones did not deliver the expected levels of proficiency. The motivations due to the interest in international communication, the search for economic competitiveness, and the globalization of business have led many countries to devote policies aimed at language education, especially EL. This movement started first in Europe, reaching other regions later on. In the third subsection, a summary of the measures adopted and the evolution of bilingual education in Latin America is presented (Brasil, 2020).

To illustrate this reality, the panelists present data from Cronquist and Fiszbein's (2017) study, such as those regarding the encouragement of teacher training in Colombia, Panama, and Peru to aggregate EL teaching in the aforementioned countries. They also highlight the initiative taken by Chile and Uruguay to offer the language in basic education; this attitude subsequently inspired the same steps in Colombia, Mexico, and Costa Rica. At that time, Brazil and Argentina did not have any learning standards for language

teaching — the BNCC was also about to be published.

It is relevant to point out that, once again, the topic of bilingual education as AL is changed into EL education. In Latin America, despite comprising mainly Spanish-speaking countries, executives are interested in the following languages for business: EL (68% of respondents), Mandarin (8%), and only then Spanish (6%) (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). In addition, Santos (2013) is quoted by the scientific committee to corroborate the consolidation of EL in other spheres, such as the field of scientific research and the appropriation of the digital phenomenon.

Directing the discussion to Brazil, the fourth subsection presents a retrospective of the introduction of the Portuguese language in the country and how it became the official language and not only an additional one for the indigenous people who lived in the lands colonized by the Portuguese. In contemporary times, the account of the history of languages in Brazil deals with the demand for the teaching of EL and its expressiveness in private schools. In contrast, there are examples of public schools too, but they do not keep up with those registered in schools that charge to teach. The panelists attribute the discrepancy mainly to the lack of continuing education for teachers, the large number of students per classroom, the scarcity of technological resources, outdated digital equipment or the lack of it, and the poor internet connection in the public sector. Before closing the discussions on plurilingual education in Brazil, examples from cities like Londrina (PR) and Rio de Janeiro (RJ) are presented to show that teaching EL is possible for everyone (Brasil, 2020).

The BNCC and plurilingual education is the title of the fifth and last subsection of the analysis section (BRASIL, 2020). Some elements of the BNCC (Brasil, 2017b) are resumed, and expectations are invested in the teaching of other ALs, which is supported in the DCNEP — the expansion of the linguistic repertoire, from the almost exclusive teaching of EL to that of indigenous, African, and other languages. However, it is assumed that the teaching of EL (despite having the potential to inspire other languages' teaching) is still in need of improvement in terms of learning objectives and estimated proficiency levels. The analysis concludes with a transition to the recommendations section. It is suggested that, in the absence of a Brazilian model for assessing language use, the temporary use of international instruments should be made to measure the current teaching situation and

support future plans.

The section that closes the report, "**Recommendations to the Ministry of Education (MEC)**", is the most relevant one for this discussion and is divided into three groups of indications. The first one refers to the creation of partnerships with Higher Education institutions to promote plurilingual education policies. Then, a group of recommendations deals with the creation of a digital platform for the development of didactic materials and resources specifically for teaching languages; the promotion of initial and continuing education policies for teachers in Higher Education institutions; the encouragement of scholarships and interdisciplinary research on plurilingual education; the establishment of assessment standards and certification of proficiency for teachers; the establishment of language and content proficiency assessment and certification standards for students at the national level; and the development of a national policy for plurilingual education. Finally, the third indication recommends the revision and modernization of Pedagogy, Languages, and other degree programs aimed at the training of teachers (Brasil, 2020).

After the report is presented, the initial DCNEP document with the details will be shared, and then the two will be linked together. As much as the main purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the guidelines, the efforts of the reporting committee to gather supporting elements for the subsequent writing, and the quality of the material are worthy of recognition.

## **Literature Review**

### The National Curricular Guidelines for Plurilingual Education

The draft text for the DCNEP was approved in July 2020, it is still awaiting ratification and may undergo eventual changes, but it is distributed in six chapters thus far. The first chapter is entitled "About the object" and has as its main characteristic the definition of the scope, that is, the definition of the educational institutions of basic education to understand which ones live up to the denomination "bilingual schools". The following are specified: schools with extended hours (which do not qualify as bilingual because they do not promote curricular content integrated into the teaching of an AL), international schools (which can be bilingual, as long as they meet the requirements), and



bilingual schools (which promote a single, integrated curriculum taught in two languages).

Second, the chapter on workload provides instructions on the three types of institutions specified above. Schools with extended hours (offering at least three hours a week for the focused language), international schools (complying with the Brazilian legislation on the minimum hours for subjects in Portuguese and the present legislation on the hours in AL), and bilingual schools (with parameters according to the instruction stage). For bilingual schools dealing with Early Childhood Education (ECE), Elementary and Middle Education, the stipulated time for AL would be a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 50% of the curricular activities. While for High Schools, there would be a minimum of 20% in AL.

Next, the third chapter describes teacher education, grouping ECE and Elementary School (ELEM) into one category and Middle School (MS) and High School (HS) into another. Two proposals of basic requirements for each group are laid out in chronological order according to the beginning of the training. Thus, for teachers of ECE and ELEM who have graduated or are in initial training by 2021, it is stipulated that they must have a degree in Pedagogy or Languages; international language proficiency of at least B2; and additional training in bilingual education in a course with a minimum duration of 120 hours, a specialization, a master's degree, or a Ph.D. For those starting in 2022 or after 2022, the last point would no longer be necessary since they would be required to have an initial degree in Bilingual Pedagogy or Bilingual Languages.

For teachers in Middle School and High School who have graduated or are in initial training by 2021, the difference would be in relation to their degree, which should be in Languages or an equivalent degree with the subject under their responsibility — while maintaining the requirements of international language proficiency of at least B2 and additional training in bilingual education in a course with a minimum duration of 120 hours, a specialization, a master's degree, or a Ph.D. In relation to the teachers in this group who will be starting in 2022, the possible initial degree would be in Languages, Bilingual Languages, or a degree equivalent to the subject, with the other two requirements regarding proficiency and additional training remaining. However, it is important to point out that the chances of the years stipulated in

this topic changing are high, depending on the approval date of the DCNEP, both for teachers of Early Childhood and Elementary School, as well as for those of Middle School and High School.

Chapter four organizes guidelines in relation to the curriculum, mainly ensuring compliance with the BNCC. In bilingual schools and those with extended class hours, the subjects regulated by the Common Base prevail, with the differential of offering some subjects entirely in AL. In both types of institutions, transdisciplinary projects can also be developed covering the subjects of the Diversified Base of the curriculum in AL. As for international schools, in the case of Brazilian schools, they must follow the international curriculum while maintaining the Brazilian curriculum. In the case of schools founded by immigrants, they must follow both the bilateral agreements signed at the time of foundation and the DCNEP. The methodological choice remains at the discretion of the institutions in all cases — without losing sight of the competencies and abilities established by the BNCC.

In the next chapter, evaluation is the fifth point that is discussed, always linked to the school curriculum. Complementing the national legislation, Brazilian international schools must also comply with the international standards; international schools must follow the terms agreed upon in the foundation and the DCNEP. For the proficiency assessment, it is established that the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) parameters will be followed; 80% of the class should reach a minimum of A2 in 6th grade, B1 in 9th grade, and B2 in the 3rd year of high school.

Concluding the Draft Resolution, the last chapter deals with the transitional and final provisions, which can change due to the established dates considering the period in which the text was submitted and approved (mid-2020). The chapter mentions, for example, adjustment plans to be communicated to the external and internal community, requirements and deadlines for teachers to prove adequate training, as well as the role of the Union, the states, and the municipalities in the adequacy of public education.

## **Methodology**

As a result of an analysis based mainly on a document, this paper consists of documentary research. The present production is also based on a

bibliographic review of language teaching. It is understood that the application of this methodology allows a greater comprehensiveness of the facts, gathering several findings in a complex production that would be practically unfeasible to be carried out by a single researcher (Gil, 2016). The combination of both methodological approaches allows the authors to reflect on the DCNEP in accordance with previous publications, pointing to common sense and divergences.

## **Results and discussion**

Having presented the DCNEP in its general terms and, thus far, subject to changes due to the homologation that is still pending, this work focuses on analyzing the original text's content in its exhibition order. Starting with chapter two, there is a lack of discussion on the topic of translanguaging, which considers bilingual individuals as people who, in their repertoire, possess much more than the accumulation of what two monolingual individuals could have. By quoting García (2009), the scientific committee appointed to contribute to the DCNEP explains translanguaging as a linguistic continuum justified by the difficulty in demarcating boundaries between languages. Thus, it is important to highlight the high applicability of the concept and its already proven relevance for the acquisition of AL, an importance that the DCNEP does not deny, but neither does corroborate.

In the third chapter, concerns about the costs of professional improvement for teachers working in private educational institutions are raised. This burden is attributed to the Union, the states, and the municipalities in the case of public school teachers, but this topic is not addressed in the case of private teachers. Another issue that could be included for the sake of the quality of teaching in bilingual schools would be AL training for all professionals working in the field, and to capacitate them to understand a bilingual approach, favoring the school's participation as a whole in the student's training in an AL. This is not about the expectation of training all employees to be fluent in the language, but at least to be able to understand the acquisition process and the basic repertoire of everyday sentences of that AL.

We understand this continuity as indispensable for the construction of a truly bilingual school, going beyond the classroom itself and integrating spaces

such as playgrounds, cafeterias, corridors, and others. In this logic, it is worth noting the comments in chapter four about the curriculum organized in Common Core subjects entirely in AL, without fragmenting the classes to work on language teaching. In other words, the AL approach is emphasized as a means of content instruction. Additionally, the possibility of working with subjects from the Diversified Base in transdisciplinary projects organized in AL deserves equal emphasis; it allows the development of knowledge in a connected way as it avoids the segmentation of fixed subjects.

In its fifth chapter, when addressing assessment issues and establishing its relationship with the CEFR, it applies an inquiry that goes beyond the context of the present Draft Resolution and even beyond the national scenario. Using European cultural parameters besides the linguistic ones they propose to evaluate, the international proficiency tests can present unreliable results regarding the language level of individuals.

A discussion of the bias of the DCNEP can be made in chapter five, which claims to be plurilingual and based on a report that includes indigenous languages and Brazilian sign language (Libras), but materializes itself in a proposal focused on the teaching of foreign languages, mostly European ones. Throughout the DCNEP, especially between the lines, it can be noticed that the objective of discussing the AL in its diversity loses ground, a fact that culminates in European evaluation parameters, which are unlikely to be applicable to the evaluation of minority languages such as the two mentioned above. By adopting the term "additional languages", one would expect that the DCNEP would do justice to the definition of the concept as Lima et al. (2019) proposed, thinking of a new language without subtracting or replacing the mother tongue, official or otherwise. However, instead of expanding the individual's repertoire with knowledge of other possibilities, through carelessness or not, the guidelines seem to contribute to the erasure of minority languages.

In the end, despite mentioning the role of the states in the adjustment of teacher education, chapter six could also contemplate the importance of considering local settings (not only states but also municipalities) in the application of measures proposed by the DCNEP. Because Brazil is a large and diverse territory, there are already proposals for teaching AL in specific locations, and it is important to consider those works that have been carried out in isolation.

## Conclusions

When analyzing the DCNEP Project and the report that precedes it, one notices that there is a tendency in the document to direct the support to specific foreign languages even though it has the word "plurilingual" in its title. However, even in the shadow of the majority, Libras, indigenous languages, and border languages (in Brazil, especially Spanish) can benefit from the proposals gathered in the legislation, even if the first motivation for their creation does not seem linked to minority languages. The relevance of including linguistic policies that value diversity, favoring intercultural, anti-racist, and decolonial human formation, is ratified.

As for the impact on basic education, this time without contemplating the language to be taught, the educational stages that best receive the DCNEP are precisely those that were most neglected thus far. Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, which had practically no support in terms of language offerings, can now count on legal grounds with the homologation of the norms.

There are certainly numerous issues that the document does not cover (including some already delimited by the commission's report), its implementation needs to be monitored, but its potential to act as a landmark, a turning point in the area, is evident.

As an example for future improvement of national legislation, the issue of democratizing access to education in AL remains open. ECE and ELEM remain outside the discussion of mandatory schooling, a scenario that reinforces the non-homogeneity of the public sector in relation to the private sector, where the latter offers opportunities from an early age with a frequency notably higher than the first one.

Furthermore, the slowness of the approval process of an old demand, which continues to lack support, is noted. Approximately two years since their approval (July 2020), the non-homologation of the guidelines and/or their improvement (to be officially recognized) disregards the effort expended thus far by several social actors. This paper takes up the subject and brings to mind that it is essential to judge, eventually revise, and finally approve national guidelines for plurilingual education in Brazil.

## Acknowledgments

The author(s) would like to thank the Writing Center (Centro de Escrita Acadêmica - [www3.unicentro.br](http://www3.unicentro.br)) of State University of Western Center of Paraná (Unicentro) for assistance with English language translation and developmental editing.

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## CAPÍTULO 12

Competency-Based Language Teaching in Mexico:  
«A Cutting Edge Model within a Traditional Framework»

Gloria Carolina Pallanez Dávila  
carolina.pallanez@unison.mx  
Universidad de Sonora

### **Introduction**

Globalization has impacted different areas of society and affected teaching and learning. Competency-Based Education (CBE) has developed due to the international economic changes and influenced the educational agendas. Hence, language programs have also been adapted to this model, and the term Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), used to describe CBE programs within a language context, has emerged. Yet, it is vital to acknowledge in what way these neoliberal guidelines have impacted teaching and learning and how practicing educationalists have approached this task. Educators are the ones who have conclusive decisions about the events implemented in classrooms. In this report, I emphasized teachers' agency to get a closer view of how these policies influence instruction. Thus, "agency is not only concerned with what is observable, but it also involves not visible behaviors', beliefs, thoughts and feelings; all of which must be understood in relation to the various context and affordances from which they cannot be abstracted" (Mercer, 2012, p. 42).

This study investigates how Competency-Based Language Teaching impacts teacher agency. Teachers explained how they implement the CBLT model and allowed me to access their classrooms and observe how this policy is being applied. In the end, teachers are the ones who decide what happens inside classrooms and have the power to determine what is learned. This qualitative study aimed to analyse teacher agency under the Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) model that has been implemented in a B.A. of English Language Teaching in a state university in the Northwest region of Mexico. The main interest was to know how teachers deal with this model in classrooms and

the dynamics surrounding assessment that evolve from this top-down policy implementation. CBLT and Competency-Based Education (CBE) will be used throughout the text. My research yielded results at different levels, and in turn, different emergent categories arose within the research. In this chapter, I will focus on one of the emerging categories where the lack of flexibility of the Mexican educational system is evidenced when implementing international educational models. I named this category "a cutting edge model within a traditional framework" since it was a phrase used by the participants in this study to talk about this topic.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

The Competency-based approach has been recommended to different educational curriculums internationally. Nevertheless, the completion of the model requires several adjustments in various pedagogic features, such as its conceptualization, material variety, instructional tactics, as well as in the way in which data is gathered for assessment of the target competencies. According to CBE/CBLT supporters, it is also critical to place the students' roles at the center of education. This is where trainers face the most defiant area. Thus, it is interesting to witness if this change happens or if it turns out to be a simulation or an adjustment of the model. It is critical to note in what way educationalists deal with this task and how they respond to this educational policy.

CBE/CBLT presents a normalization of concepts that specify the system to achieve the required competencies. The curriculum takes content (from external standards and local goals) and structures it into a design to develop successful instruction. It is the map of how to achieve outputs of desired student performance (Richards, 2013). However, Kumaravadivelu (2006) points out:

Established methods are founded on idealized concepts geared toward idealized contexts. And, as such, they are removed from classroom reality. No idealized method can visualize all the variables in advance to provide context-specific solutions that practicing teachers badly need in order to tackle the challenges that confront every day of their professional lives. (p.165)

The investigation detailed in this report aims to display in what way the top-down political pressures influence educationalists, the key agents of education. Therefore, this influence affects teachers' characteristics by imposing models that may contrast with their perspectives. As Kumaradivelu (2008) states, "we have treated method as an all- pervasive, all-powerful entity" (p.165) and therefore, it is necessary to know the nature of teachers' reactions to these challenges, and what they perform in classrooms due to such demands.

Nowadays, all the selected university curricula are constructed on this model, including postgraduate programs. To preserve the anonymity of the university, I omitted its name and I changed it to "Metropolitan University" (MU). The model focuses on students' learning and competencies, which are the CBLT approach's core. According to the program, the transformation of the educational model was due to the accelerated revolution of economic, politic, technologic, and culture in social organization. Such elements frame the most defined changes that the educational programs experiment with, especially in higher education. Undoubtedly, the CBE focus has emerged due to the global economy's changes and affected the educational programs as a domino effect. For these reasons, the university transformed its programs to be aligned with the global educational policies.

According to the premises of this institutions' model, teachers, students, and educational structures must be flexible to adapt to the global educational policies. One of the main characteristics that the educational model of the selected university promotes is flexibility. Flexibility summarizes the new way of understanding the relationships in different areas of society. In this sense, we talk about the flexibility of time and space, knowledge, assignments, and work relationships. Flexibility is needed to adapt to new situations and labour contexts, move to different regions of countries, and coordinate with workers from other parts of the world who participate in the same business's production process. Flexibility is also necessary to learn and update in any space (Centro de Estudios Superiores del Estado de Sonora, 2010). According to this posture, flexibility becomes a value that the individual must own to survive in the new context.

Flexibility is a crucial element in the educational model in the MU. In the academic area, flexibility should predominate within the relation and organization of the different MU academic campuses. Flexibility should also

exist within the curricular area, and that implies the organization of contents, areas, subjects, cycles, and modules. Within the pedagogical area, flexibility refers to the possibilities of change during the teaching process and the use of instruments that favor the teaching process. Flexibility implies the generation and the update of rules, procedures, and general conditions that favor the operation of study plans. Such flexibility presents several advantages, like incrementing the intra-institutional mobility and students' and teachers' international mobility. Another aspect that flexibility offers is that the programs and studies from other institutions could be recognized and accredited.

Furthermore, flexibility is "the constant adaptation of the tasks related to products, processes, and markets that change. It is also viewed as the workers' growing autonomy that requires more skills and self-management, as well as individual responsibility» (Centro de Estudios Superiores del Estado de Sonora, 2010, p. 6). However, using the words "products", "process", and "markets" in the definition of flexibility is a clear example of the influence of economy on the language used in educational documents, especially in higher education. This kind of language selection is due to the relationship that higher education institutions have with the labour market.

## **Methodology**

This qualitative case study analyses how the educational policy of CBLT was implemented in a classroom setting. Case studies are well documented in the literature since they "portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 129). Furthermore, case studies are a meaningful and reliable research method (Adelman et al., 1980). A critical component in this inquiry is the semi-structured interview, which employs questions to build upon the participants' responses, class observations, and the collection of students' learning outcomes that illustrate the practices performed in classrooms.

This investigation is organized within an emergent design, which means that "the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some or all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data" (Creswell, 2012, p.182). I organized the information into themes or categories that cut across all other data sources by

using multiple data sources. I decided to work through a case study since I was interested in knowing the case as a whole. In addition, the case study is not a method in itself, "instead, it is a focus, and the focus is on one thing, looked at in-depth and from many angles" (Thomas, 2016, p. 9). For that reason, I observed different kinds of phenomena in detail by triangulating diverse sorts of relevant data, The use of multiple methods helps to improve the credibility of our research... triangulation is defined as a practice of supporting validation of data by using two or more sources for cross verification. This practice gives us a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena (Rose et al., 2020, p. 243).

### Research Context and Participants

Interviews, observations, and the collection of learning outcomes were conducted at a Public State University located in the Northwest of the country. The BA in ELT was created within a CBLT curriculum, and it has worked with the model for eleven years. Consequently, the selected university holds a consolidated program that could provide a mature scenery of the examined phenomenon. Teachers and staff administrators from a BA in English Language Teaching in the Northwest Region of Mexico were chosen by identifying who the major stakeholders of the program are and who could be affected by it (see table). They were selected because they could provide relevant information about the proposed research topic and setting. The site was purposefully selected since CBLT had been their mainstream programme for about eleven years, an aspect that would provide more detailed information about a well-established programme.

### Participants Position and Background Studies

Participante	Position	Studies
Catalina	Full-time professor	Business Adm./MA in Ed/ PhD in Applied Linguistics (student)
Flor	Full-time professor	ELT BA/MA in CBE /PhD in Applied Linguistics (student)
Diana	Administrative/ Full-time professor	ELT BA/MA in CBE

Gabriela	Administrative/ Full-time professor	Economy/ELT(Experience)/MA in Ed
Clara	Administrative/ Full-time professor	Ecology/MA in Social Sciences/PhD in Social Sciences
Laura	Hourly-paid	ELT BA/MA in CBE (did not finish)
Mariana	Hourly-paid	ELT/ MA in Teachers' Formation
7 students	undergraduate students	ELT BA in progress

### Research Instruments

This case study involved a detailed description of the setting and individuals, followed by analysis of data using Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The researcher interpreted and classified the information to analyse it. Results discussion was arranged through an interpretation of the themes interconnected. At the same time, data were triangulated with the different sources of information using it to make a coherent justification of the topics and add validity to study. In the following, I describe the instruments used to gather relevant information for this inquiry.

#### Semi-structured interviews

Interpretative inquirers collect data through interview transcripts, informal observations, and the collection of students' learning outcomes. The interviews I conducted were semi-structured. I interviewed teachers and administrators who hold a vital role in the development of the model in the selected university. In a semi-structured interview, you provide the structure with a list of issues to be covered, and you have the freedom to follow up on points as necessary. Also, semi-structured interviews offer much of the ease of conduct of structured interviews but require a degree of flexibility and "careful listening skills to ask further questions about specific responses the researcher finds interesting. These allow for new ideas to form within a predetermined framework of themes" (Rose et al., 2020, p. 116).

#### Classroom Observations

I had access to observe different classes and how teachers employ their agency in classrooms to impact students' learning. "Observations in social

research are the actions of watching, recording and in qualitative approaches, interpreting and reflecting on human activity and behaviour" (Rose et al., 2020, p.92). In addition to the interviews, observations were the critical elements of the present research to go in-depth into the reality in classrooms and how teachers cope with the CBLT curriculum in practice.

### Students' Learning Outcomes

In order to verify if the CBLT policy and its assessment premises are employed within the classroom context, I asked students for some examples of their learning outcomes. Some students did facilitate their learning evidence, and I was able to examine, compare and contrast them with the assessment premises of the CBLT educational policy. I basically observed if the kind of learning outcome presented was congruent with the type of outcomes suggested by the CBLT approach.

### Data Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, I analysed the data gathered through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA presents a critical attitude when targeting the different topics and searching for reflection about what is happening in the educational system from the so-called commercialization of education. Also, this approach can provide significant answers to my research questions that cover aspects related to power reproduction or resistance of the educational actors. CDA can be employed in any discipline; therefore, it is not exclusive to linguistics or applied linguistics; still, it takes language elements to grasp conclusions. Van Dijk (2009) proposed to change the name of CDA to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) because there is no similar analysis covering all the elements that CDS embrace. His motivation to suggest a change in the denomination of this analysis goes beyond since CDS analyse discourse not only as an autonomous verbal object but as truly social, cultural, historical or political practice.

CDS analyse in-depth the pre-established intentions not openly mentioned by the actors of power directed through different discursive processes to persuade or lead specific group(s) within the population. For this

purpose, CDS utilise any method that is pertinent to the objectives of inquiry and hold the aim of contributing to the social strengthening of the dominated groups, especially in the domain of discourse and communication (Van Dijk, 2009). In addition, CDS focus on analysing those language structures that could trigger social consequences and influence the social beliefs and, thus, the receivers' actions.

Since CDS are positioned on the side of the oppressed, their focus is on the discourse properties associated with the expression, confirmation, reproduction, or impugnation of social power as members of the dominant groups (Van Dijk, 2009), and such analysis must "describe and explain how the institutions of dominant groups promulgate, reproduce and legitimize the power abuse" (p. 121). Given this panorama, CDS are valuable to study the connections linking the instruction, learning and curriculum, as well as ideologies and power and their consequences on the classroom process and teaching-learning activity (Bukhari & Xiaoyang, 2013).

## Results

As mentioned in the introduction, the focus of this chapter will be on one of the emergent categories that evolved from the data gathering. The participants were willing to share their thoughts and ideas about the educational policy being implemented, and exposed different challenging areas when implementing the approach in a Mexican context. Through this section, I will draw on these aspects based on the participants' perspectives about the topic. According to one of the participants, who I named Clara, CBE represents a Eurocentric Model in a Mexican country. This topic emerged particularly during her interview, where she expressed the problems that she sees in the CBE implementation, as can be observed in the following selection:

Clara: "The big problem is... we saw it when we were designing it, and I see it now that we are implementing it: we have a model that exceeds the Mexican model. That is to say; we are working with a model that we thought could be cutting-edge. Still, we are tied up, confined to a Mexican pedagogical model of assessment that does not allow flexibility".



Clara points out that Mexico is not prepared to have a model used in other countries, specifically Europe, since the assessment system "*confines*" teachers and students to follow the traditional path. Furthermore, she mentions that the team's intentions in designing the educational model at Metropolitan University were the best. However, Clara starts with this statement and uses the words: "*the big problem*", stating that this is the central aspect of Clara's belief: the CBE implementation has been partial in the Metropolitan University and the different educational levels in Mexico. She also applies the phrases "*exceeds the Mexican model*", "*we thought that could be cutting-edge*", "*Tied up*", "*confined*" and "*does not allow*" when talking about it.

For this reason, what can be inferred about Clara's statement is that the actual conditions of the Mexican assessment system limit the CBE implementation and impact on teacher agency, as explained in this chapter. Averages and summative assessment are the main elements that govern the assessment. This is how this mismatch between the CBE model and the Mexican educational system comes about. Even at a higher education institution where the planning stage and training seemed to be "by the book", other external aspects appear to tie up and impede the appropriate development of the approach since the peripheral educational policies do not support this internal change.

Standardised education does not necessarily fit in the reality of students and, therefore, in the reality of classroom needs. Moreover, this is a clear example of what happened to the Metropolitan University while implementing a CBE and CBLT approach. As Clara explains, they are "confined" to a Mexican system that does not allow flexibility. I decided to address this topic since I consider this central for showing what could originate the resistance and compliance attitudes manifested by professors at the Metropolitan University. For instance, and to mention a few effects of the assessment system: Numbers are still required in all official documents instead of using categories of competencies like in CBE; summative assessment is the one that controls the assessment system, and standardized tests are used for students' certifications, assessment is linked to teachers' economic stability, time constraints limit teacher agency, among other effects analysed within my research.

However, "*the cutting-edge model*" also presented specific problems, especially in the flexibility aspect it promotes. Clara continues explaining her

point of flexibility issues in the following fragment:

Clara: "For example, the mobility aspects are a problem for us. We promote mobility to our students, but to start with, we cannot use the qualitative evaluation system, outstanding, advanced... etc. We have to translate that to numbers. But why do we have to translate to numbers? Well, because averages give scholarships. The Education Department is still number- based. Then, when the students go on mobility, it is not like in Europe. For example, you can go anywhere, take something, even if it is not your major, and then you come back and adapt it to your major, and your credits are solved. Here it does not happen like that. Here you must take a subject that matches your study plan. Then, there must be a committee that evaluates that this study plan is similar to that one, and then, only then, it could be valued as subject credit. And that ties you up. Our students in mobility delay in their studies, invariably they delay in their studies. What advantages can you offer them? Well, you sell them the idea and tell them about the culture and a new experience, but what is the price? Students delay one semester or one more year to finish their studies."

One of the CBE/CBLT model's main intentions is to promote mobility among teachers and students. However, according to Clara, the mobility issue is not, in reality, as stated. Other elements influence that a student can go to different countries and experience seeing the world through different lenses or cultures. Mobility is one of the main objectives through CBE; to align all the world programs to have flexibility and students' and teachers' mobility around countries. The assessment system linked to universities' regulations seems to limit this mobility aspect. Still, in this case, the Metropolitan University "*ties students up*" to specific procedures with time consequences in their studies.

As observed, the mobility aspect is performed but not as planned within the CBE model. Clara continues contrasting how the model has worked in Europe and why it does not work in Mexico. She links this aspect to assessment and the way that credits are taken. It seems that nothing has changed in the Mexican educational policies in the mobility aspect. Since students have to make a request, research the subjects and submit this to an evaluation board to approve that such subjects match their study plan, Clara mentions that what happens is that students have to take an extra year or semester when they go out for an exchange programme. Students must find an exact match of all the

subjects planned for the semester or year projected in the Metropolitan University; otherwise, they must take an extra year to complete their BA studies.

This rigid policy exemplifies incongruence between the educational practices and the CBE/CBLT approach's primary purposes. Clara offers a more comprehensive panorama of the CBE/CBLT approach and what, according to her judgment, does not provide the proper CBE/CBLT implementation. She sees mobility as one aspect of flexibility incongruent with the practice programme. Also, another concern that Clara points out is that, in theory, within the CBE/CBLT approach, students can have their learning rhythm, as it is observed in the following interview segment:

Clara: "Flexibility is very complicated. Timing, for example, students can have their own learning pace because it depends on the students, their capacity, and their learning, which is what the theory says. But when circumscribing the student to space-time, the student does not have such freedom. The student that has a job, for example... The Metropolitan University improved flexibility elements. For instance, students can take four to eight subjects now depending on whether they are working. However, it is inside a frame. Flexibility is always inside a frame."

Clara denotes fundamental features about flexibility effects during the CBE implementation. According to CBLT, students can work and acquire the target competencies at their own pace. According to its advocates, for the CBLT approach to function as it is meant, teachers, students and the educational structures need to be flexible to adapt to the international educational policies. One of the main characteristics of the educational model of the Metropolitan University is flexibility. According to the model, flexibility summarizes the new way of understanding the relationships in different areas of society.

In this sense, the Metropolitan University educational program discusses the flexibility of time and space, knowledge, assignments, and work relationships: "Flexibility to adapt to a new situation and labor contexts, move to different regions of countries, and coordinate with workers from other parts of the world that participate in the production process within the same business. Flexibility to learn and update in any space" (Centro de Estudios Superiores del Estado de Sonora, 2010). However, it is a fact that the semester has periods

that instructors and learners follow. Students have specific due dates that they must follow to be promoted to the next semester.

The reality indicates that nothing has changed on the semester schedules to align with CBLT, which is another incongruence with the approach. The results show that students and teachers are tied to time constraints that contradict the flexibility quality that the model proposes as one of its main benefits. However, it is not the case that students have time to work at their own pace. The reality is that the students also have specific deadlines to meet and pass or fail to complete the semester. If the student does not manage to finish on time, the student fails the semester. Again, Clara points out that the flexibility issue defeats the idea of having students work according to their own pace.

Therefore, flexibility in the study programs is another aspect the Mexican system does not allow, which is linked to assessment. It seems that the approach is far from the reality of the study programs in Mexico since, as Clara mentions, such incongruences are produced when circumscribing the student to space-time and the same old calendar scheme. Also, it is essential to consider teachers' real possibilities and resources. By actual conditions, I mean the physical circumstances, including time and space conditions of the classroom, the number of students, the time constraints that might affect the curriculum development, the workload of teachers, among other situations that might occur, and the average development pace in the classroom. When the curriculum is so determined and detailed, and the standards have been established, the lack of flexibility about everyday problems is more complicated.

Flexibility is expressed within the educational model in four areas: (1) Academic, concerning the relation and organization of academic campuses; (2) Curricular, comprising the organization of possibilities of contents, areas, subjects, cycles, and modules; (3) Pedagogical, referring to the possibilities of change in the teaching process and the environments, means, and instruments that aim to favor the teaching process; and (4) Administrative, in other words, the update of rules, procedures, and general conditions that favor the operation of study plans (Centro de Estudios Superiores del Estado de Sonora p.6). Although the educational model contemplates curricular flexibility, the Mexican educational system is regulated by a specific and rigid calendar that

universities must follow. Clara provided a broader vision of the CBE / CBLT implementation.

Another aspect that Clara points out about flexibility is that professors have misunderstood it. She means that some teachers understand flexibility by letting students do whatever they want. This viewpoint is evident in the following passage:

Clara: "Another problem is that flexibility has been misunderstood. Flexibility is not allowing the student to do whatever they want, but many teachers took it like that: We are flexible and let them do whatever they want. Now I am not a behaviorist anymore. I am a constructivist; you as a student: present, all the semester, present, and I am not going to close the knowledge, I am not going to show you the competencies, and my evaluation is your presentation. Then the student complains and says: we are only presenting; the teacher does not do anything, and we do not even know if what we do is correct because that conclusion by the teacher is not delivered."

Clara points out an apparent misunderstanding of the constructivist model. Although students are indeed the ones that construct and develop their knowledge, the facilitators are there to help students complete their competency development. Clara mentions that teachers shifted from being behaviorist to being constructivist. However, from her perspective, the Metropolitan University implemented this change wrongly. Again, she indicates that teachers incorporated some elements of CBLT into their teaching. Still, they have not gotten the main idea: closing knowledge and aligning it to develop competencies. She even mentions that students complain because they present a lot but do not get the necessary feedback. She suggests that the conclusion by the teacher at the end is not delivered. I will also analyse this lack of feedback topic later in this paper. This last excerpt of Clara could be linked to the idea that the system benefits lazy students, as Flor expressed above. She restates that she believes in the CBE and the constructivist model, but she thinks that in Mexico, it does not work, as I will explain in the following excerpts:

Clara: "I believe in the competencies model, what I do not believe is in the system in Mexico... but, how it is managed with the references that we had (which were European), that sounds nice, but in Mexico, I do not feel it works."

Clara: "I believe that teachers put their best effort, but it is impossible to follow it as it is; impossible. I insist we created a cutting-edge model within a traditional framework."

Clara states that the model "sounded nice" with the references they had when they planned it. However, these references were European and, according to her statement, are based on a different educational system. Furthermore, although educators put in their best effort to sustain and accommodate the model, the Mexican Framework of education does not allow this to work as expected. She uses the word "impossible", displaying her frustration with the model's implementation. Furthermore, she "insists" that they formulated a "cutting-edge model within a traditional framework". This reveals that although they intended the model to function in these conditions, it does not suit the framework of the Mexican educational context. Therefore, although professors try their best, some aspects of the setting do not allow its planned implementation. Clara continues explaining certain elements that sustain her statement. For instance, she suggests that another issue she observes is that teachers do not have an "appropriate" conclusion of the topics presented in classes:

Clara: "We were formed within the same scope of Mexican education that has not changed. Now (we receive) our students from high school with constructivists models, and when I teach the induction course, I ask students: Have you worked with competencies? Yes... Do you know how to make portfolios? Okay... What else do you know how to do? Nothing else. Then I ask: What are the competencies? They are objectives, and they say that they work on competencies. They did specific innovations, but they continue working with objectives. Then, I feel that if the Mexican education system does not change that idea, we will not be able to change it either."

Clara: "I learn from you, and you learn from me; we (teachers) do not accomplish to concretise. Why?"

Through this study's development, the topic of basic education working with a deficient constructivist model came up in different interviews. According to the participants, when students reach higher education, they lack specific necessary study skills to develop competencies— especially the skills related to critical reading and critical thinking. Therefore, scholars

concentrate on developing students' debating competencies. Still, it takes much time, and as they said, it is challenging, and it takes much work to strengthen these competencies in only four years.

Another aspect that Clara discusses is the traditional framework that educators still carry within them. She suggests that the closing part where the competencies are pointed out and where professors and students learn from each other is still missing. Norris (1991) states that the model focuses on practical learning outcomes instead of the process as a whole. This aspect does not guarantee that the student will develop adequately in various contexts. Clara suggests that teachers are worried about demonstrating competencies and showing learning outcomes. However, as she states, teachers still miss the closing part where the competencies are pointed out to students.

Clara's statement might suggest that the educational model has had some improvements and that teachers have consolidated some components of the CBE/CBLT strategy into their pedagogy. However, they are still working with the same paradigm. Clara seems to suggest that administrators and professors are doing their best to develop the educational model in higher education. Professors must deal with a weak basis for its construction. This argument is evident in the phrase, "if the Mexican system does not change that idea, we will not be able to change it either". Professors feel that they must build and develop study skills and competencies almost from zero; meanwhile, they deal with their teachers' and students' development challenges. Flor talks about the same issue in the Mexican system of education in the following excerpt:

Flor: "We come from an educational system where the cognitive skills, which talk about a superior order, are not exercised. It is very difficult, very demanding. The student learns from the activities and making a well-thought activity that you make the student think takes much more time than doing something more mechanical, automatic, or the same thing, then it is difficult. Students come trained to receive; they sit down waiting for you to fill them. When you turn them around and make them work, you risk it because they do not understand what you are doing or do not want to do it. After all, it represents work, and then your evaluation as a teacher goes down. "

Flor specifies that when students enter higher education, they are expecting to be fulfilled. According to Flor, students feel like empty containers that need to be filled with information. These ideas belong to the teacher-centered approach, where instructors transmitted knowledge, and learners were seen as recipients of the information. Within the Competency-Based model, students are the ones that work the most, not teachers. The paradigm change that the CBE/CBLT proposes is working slowly to change the reality in classrooms.

Moreover, not only do teachers remain partially in command, the focus still lies on them. According to constructivism, the student is considered the leading actor, assuming an active role in searching, analysing, and integrating knowledge. The pupil requires planning, supervision, and assessment activities developed by the facilitator; moreover, this terminology change brings a shift in connotation, no longer putting the teacher as the one who transmits knowledge but as the one who facilitates it to pupils. Students will fulfill CBE assessment through products or learning outcomes that they produce according to the program's standards (Díaz et al., 2014). This means that students are the ones who work and that the focus should be on their development within the CBE framework. The educational model document also refers precisely to the paradigm change in higher education. There is a shift from teaching characterized by high specialization, long duration and theoretical overload that ended up with professionals and technicians "highly specialized with a limited occupational performance". However, according to Flor, students bring a teacher-centered scheme within their basic education that is hard to change in four years.

On another note, Flor brings up a sensitive topic concerning professors' evaluations and labour and financial stability within the same excerpt. The participant mentions that teachers risk when trying to get their students to work because they do not understand this new way of working or do not want to do it since it represents work. Students are not used to being the main protagonists in their learning. Students are not used to producing and demonstrating the acquisition of skills. They do not understand this new way of working, so when it is their turn to evaluate teachers, they give them a "bad grade". This, in turn, produces a domino effect where the teacher has other employment repercussions. Since students do not understand this new way of working, the teacher's risk is that their confusion makes them deliver poor professors'



evaluations. At the end of the semester, students are asked to evaluate the professors' work. There are different criteria where students evaluate the professor, which is considered for the professor to continue working next semester. Therefore, assessment in the classroom might directly affect teachers' evaluation, hence their labour and financial stability.

Piazza (2014) claims that states that have embraced a wide variety of reforms are commonly considered part of the neo-liberal agenda for school improvement, aiming to make public education function as a private business. Teachers conditioned to "client satisfaction" to be hired next semester relates to having higher education function as a private company. As Flor mentions, it affects teacher agency in classrooms. Also, Silcock et al. (2014) mention that "the enterprising language and skills required assisted in producing us as experts who could operate in the market... we provided services that could be measured, recorded and evaluated" (p. 9). This commercialization language of higher education is found in the Metropolitan University's educational model.

Therefore, administrative actions affect teachers' development in classrooms, and additionally, they must deal with students' expectations that affect their agency. As can be seen, teachers at the Metropolitan University are exposed to different pressures and responsibilities that involve their actions in class and risk their source of work. In other words, teachers' economic stability is at the expense of students' satisfaction. In the participants' voice, this might empower students' attitudes towards developing the actions in class. In the following excerpt, Clara explains how the student-centered approach is far from being developed in the Metropolitan University:

Clara: "For example, the model is student-centered, but the university is centered in administration; what is more comfortable, faster, with the least possible resource, even if this is more difficult to the student. And then you see students forming queues here, and afterwards, they go to another place and get a signature there, and another signature in a different place. It is not a model centered on the student. It is administrative-centered... The teacher, the link between the administration and the student, is more conscious, but the administrative part is not student-centered."

As Clara has a broader view of the implementation model, she comments that Metropolitan University should be aligned with the model. The

Metropolitan University planned the model to be student-centered; nevertheless, she mentions it is not student-centered but administrative-centered. She states that everything in the university should be aligned to the student's development and that the student should be the most significant part of the university. Instead, it is planned similarly to corporations aligned to clients, and all the procedures should ease selling and client satisfaction. Nevertheless, this aspect does not occur at the Metropolitan University. Clara points out how everything should proceed according to the educational model and how it has vulnerable points to be improved. It would be interesting to analyse the components of this alignment to the design and the characteristics of its evolution. Moreover, Clara's statement could be perceived as if they were "swimming against the tide". That is to say; teachers are trying to incorporate elements of CBE/CBLT into their daily practice. However, the administrative department's current conditions, outside policies, and the educational system in Mexico do not resemble the initial plan.

## Conclusion

Findings support the idea that the students who work and perfect their skill at their own pace is a fallacy in the Mexican context. Flexibility in the student's work pace does not exist in the current system. The "flexible" aspect of the program has been misunderstood. In addition, the university does not seem to be student-centered; instead, it seems to be "administrative-centered", and the concept of flexibility seems to be accommodated to ease the administrative departments work and to complicate student's processes. Moreover, according to the participants, students do not come prepared to work within a CBE/CBLT model of learning. Even when the basic Mexican educational system is competency-based, students seem not to understand this way of working and are confused with the processes when they enter university, affecting their perception of teachers' responsibilities and hence the way they evaluate their teachers. This is detrimental to teachers' financial stability since students' evaluations are considered to rehire hourly-paid teachers.

One of the main competence-based education guidelines is formative instruction and assessment, where competence is modeled through constant feedback on the student's work. According to the data collected in this study, the model offers a clear structure of how the student can acquire the target

competence. However, this requires constant feedback. In the Metropolitan University's case, where the groups are large and there are time pressures, following the model as it is, is, in the words of the participants, "impossible." The amount of work required of the teacher is "absorbing". This suggests that the assessment system within the Mexican education system is rigid and does not support evidence-based models as it should be with a CBLT/CBE approach. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers are in the middle of a top-down policy, and although they are willing to make it work, CBLT is, as the participants mentioned, at least in Mexico, a *"cutting edge model within a traditional framework"*.

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# BREVE BIOGRAFÍA DE LOS AUTORES

## **Abigail Carretero**

PhD in Linguistics (UAQ/2014-2018), MA in Education with a certification in Higher Education (WVU/2011-2013), MA in Literature and Linguistics (WVU/2010-2012). Full time lecturer and researcher (SNI) in linguistics at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo. Her research interests are academic writing, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics and sociolinguistics.

## **Adrián de Jesús Girón Chávez**

PTC PRODEP UNACH, por 22 años. Miembro de UNACH-CA-173 Innovación y Diversificación en Lenguas. Cuenta con Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera Universidad de Guadalajara, Doctorado en Tecnología Educativa. Desarrolla investigación en innovación tecnológica para la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas.

## **Alexia Alejandra Cárdenas Zavala**

Universidad Estatal de Sonora. Cuenta con Maestría en Lenguas Modernas por la UABC. Es catedrática en la Licenciatura de Enseñanza del inglés en la Universidad Estatal de Sonora. Actualmente estudia sus estudios de posgrado; Doctorado en Ciencias del Lenguaje por la UABC. Entre sus intereses se encuentra la enseñanza del inglés, creencias y prácticas pedagógicas del docente de lenguas.

## **Annie Marie Gallegos**

Studied Science of Education in Bilingual Education with a minor in Chicano Studies at the University of New Mexico. Currently, she is a LAELI student. She is part of the administrative staff at Dolores Gonzalez Elementary school in behavior management in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was a teacher at Instituto Juarez-Lincoln at different school levels.

### **Maribel Guzmán Mijangos**

Is a professor and researcher at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. She holds a BA in ELT, a master's in Higher Education. She has developed research in the areas of curriculum development, language learning, teacher training and professional development.

### **Cibele Krause Lemke**

Doctora en Educación por la Universidad de São Paulo (2010). Postdoctora por la Universidad de Southampton (2019). Profesora Asociada de la Universidad Estatal del Centro-Oeste – UNICENTRO. Lidera el grupo de investigación Lengua, Inmigración e Identidad. Sus investigaciones tienen énfasis en Lengua Española; contextos multilíngues, políticas lingüísticas y formación de profesores de lenguas.

### **Elsa Yolanda Cruz Maldonado**

PTC PRODEP UNACH, por 26 años. Líder del cuerpo académico UNACH-CA-173 Innovación y Diversificación en Lenguas. Cuenta con la Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés por la Universidad de Southampton en el Reino Unido y Doctorado en Educación. Desarrolla investigación en Innovación en la enseñanza de idiomas, identidad y universitarios.

### **Fernanda Seidel Bortolotti**

Ph.D. Student in Education at Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste, Guarapuava, Brazil.

### **Fernando Hernández Calixto**

Has a BA in English Language and an MA in TEFL (UV). He holds an FCE certification by the University of Cambridge, B2 level. His research interests are led by his willingness to offer a high academic level of English Language teaching by improving the four language skills uniformly.

### **Gloria Carolina Pallanez Dávila**

Holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics in ELT by the University of Southampton. In addition, she is an ELT and EFL professor at the University of Sonora in Mexico. Her main research interests include language teaching and learning, assessment, agency, competency-based education, language ideologies, curriculum design, language policy and critical discourse analysis.

### **Josué Cinto Morales**

Is a professor and researcher at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. He holds a PhD in education. He has developed research in the areas of curriculum development, language learning, teacher training and professional development.

### **Lilia Sulema Bórquez Morales**

PhD in Applied Linguistics for English Teaching (University of Southampton, UK) and Fellow of the British Higher Education Academy. Full time lecturer and researcher at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, With 30-year experience in language teaching, her research interests include teachers' beliefs, teachers' professional development and Integrable Pedagogy.

### **Loremi Loregian Penkal**

Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste Unicentro – PR, Brazil. Doctor in Linguistics. Associate Professor at UNICENTRO PR. Coordinator of the research groups Centro de Estudos Vênetos no Paraná, CEVEP; Linguistic Variation of Slavic Speech, VARLINFE, and is part of the research team of the Urban Linguistic Variation in the South Region, VARSUL, and the Slavic Studies Center, NEES.

### **María del Rocío Domínguez Gaona**

Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. Cuenta con el Doctorado en Ciencias Educativas de UABC. Es catedrática en la Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Lenguas, la Maestría en Lenguas Modernas y el Doctorado en Ciencias del lenguaje en UABC. Pertenece al CA de Lingüística Aplicada. Entre sus intereses se encuentran la evaluación del aprendizaje, la enseñanza de lenguas y el aprendizaje autónomo.

### **María Magdalena Cass Zubiría**

Holds a PhD in Modern Languages from the University of Southampton and an MEd in Teacher Training from the University of Exeter, UK. She has been an English teacher and teacher trainer for over 30 years. She currently works at the University of Colima, Mexico.

### **Marisol Fernández Zetina**

Earned her MA in ELT from Southampton University. She has worked as a teacher for almost 14 years and has also been involved in the development of several linguistic projects. She became one of the team-leaders who developed the BA in English Language Teaching as well as the Bilingual High School. She is the coordinator of the Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras that host both programmes.

### **Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado**

M.A. in ELT from the University of Southampton and is studying a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics at the same university. She works as a full-time lecturer and researcher at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo. Her research areas include teacher-learner autonomy, language teacher education, professional development, and teletandem.

### **Mauri da Cruz de Morais**

Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste Unicentro – PR, Brazil. Master in Literature by UNICENTRO PR, in the area of interfaces, student of Doctor degree by PPGL Unicentro PR. Researcher and student at the Centro de Estudos Vênets no Paraná, CEVEP; in which he composes the front of "Preservation Policies".

### **Pablo Moreno Arenas**

Participó en movilidad Académica en "Hankuk University of Foreign Studies" Corea del Sur dentro de "Peer tutoring program" dando clases de español/cultura mexicana. Participo con ACNUR enseñando español a refugiados. Conferencista de "Becoming a better school" Homecoming 2019 Emerging Trends in ELT. Actualmente imparte inglés en "English4Fun" y "Lexicón".

### **Patricia Núñez Mercado**

Is a full-time lecturer-researcher at the School of Languages, Universidad Veracruzana. She holds an MA in TEFL from the Universidad Veracruzana and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Southampton. Her research interests are literacy development in higher education and effective teacher instruction



### **Raphael Hubert Elie Sebire**

Holds a Master in Literature and Spanish Civilizations from Caen University, and in FLES from Clermont Ferrand, France. He also has a Master in Virtual Education from the UV. He is full-time professor at University of Colima. He is professor of French and related subjects.

### **Rosa Cecilia Quintana**

Has been teaching EFL for over 14 years. She is currently working as Coordinator of the English Program at the Autonomous University of Coahuila. She holds a Master Degree in English Language Teaching with the University of Southampton, UK. She is interested in training and academic research.

### **Rosangela Kuspiosz Calliari**

Doctoranda en Educación por la Universidad Estatal del Centro-Oeste – UNICENTRO. Forma parte del grupo de investigación Lengua, Inmigración e Identidad. Sus investigaciones tienen énfasis en políticas lingüísticas y enseñanza de lengua extranjera para inmigrantes refugiados.

### **Secundino Isabeles Flores**

Holds a PhD in Modern Languages from the University of Southampton, UK and an M.Ed. in Teacher Training from the University of Exeter, UK. He has taught English for 20 years to different levels and age groups. Currently, he teaches at the University of Colima, Mexico.

### **Tomás Hernandez Angeles**

M.A. in ELT, University of Southampton, UK. Full-time lecturer and researcher at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo. He is currently a committee member of the Scientific Bulletin "EDÄHI", at the UAEH. His research interests are: teachers' perceptions and attitudes, Anglicisms, Linguistic Landscaping, and Migration & Transnationalism.

ISBN 978-65-88217-58-0



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