

Enletawa Journal
Vol. 8 No. 1
(Jan. - June 2015)
p. 37- 50
ISSN: 2011-835X

Blogging as an EFL Practice Beyond The Classroom

Rosa María Amado Cepeda

Luis Manuel Parra Caro Sativanorte Boyacá, Colombia
asorairam22@yahoo.com

Received: July 3th, 2015

Accepted: October 26th, 2015

Abstract

This small research project aims to explore how the use of a blog can benefit students' learning processes in a rural school. Materials such as texts, videos, and even links for connecting with other similar sites were provided to students in order to employ blogs as a language exposure platform for English learning. Data was collected by means of students' narratives (opinions) regarding their use of the blogs and informal observation of students' engagement in the process and of their artifacts. As a result, findings indicate that the use of blogs became a useful aid to support language learning due to the contact participants established with the foreign language in the learning process; incidentally blogging enhanced students' participation and interest in their own learning.

Resumen

Esta pequeña investigación tiene como objetivo explorar, cómo el empleo de un blog puede beneficiar el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes en una escuela rural. Materiales tales como textos, videos e incluso los enlaces para la conexión con otros sitios similares, fueron examinados con el fin de utilizar los blogs como una plataforma de exposición en el aprendizaje del idioma extranjero inglés. Los datos fueron recogidos por medio de la narrativa de los estudiantes (opiniones) sobre el uso de los blogs, observaciones informales y producciones de los estudiantes. Como resultado, la información indica que usar blogs podría llegar a ser un recurso útil para ayudar a los estudiantes con su proceso de aprendizaje del idioma debido a la importancia que tiene estar en continuo

Key words: Blogging in education, Exposure and Foreign Language Learning, and Virtual Learning Environment.

contacto con el inglés; incidentalmente, esta clase de experiencia incrementa la participación e interés de los estudiantes en su propio aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Blogs en educación, Exposición y Aprendizaje del idioma extranjero, Ambientes virtuales de aprendizaje.

Introduction

Modern computer technology has made language exposure possible in new and rich EFL learning experiences. The development of viable software designed to enhance communication, building meaning and knowledge construction has made possible a variety of activities and opportunities for learning that extends the walls of the classroom and offers different perspectives depending upon the agents involved. Consequently, technological literacy has become an important issue in teaching and learning processes, the use of web based education is an interesting tool; in which learners have the chance to discover, learn and reinforce their knowledge. Therefore, this initial research inquiry into this kind of pedagogical tool is designed to analyze the impact it has on teaching practices, due to the necessity of providing our students with opportunities to be in contact with the foreign language.

Accordingly the work with blogging provided students with opportunities to watch and

analyze videos as a means to reinforce some linguistic aspects taught in classes. Students had the chance to listen to a variety of language registers which can not only contribute to their development of listening skills but also to an increase in motivation.

After the need analysis, it was necessary to search for alternatives to help learners with their language process improvement and it was found that using blogs has been a relevant strategy to get students involved in meaningful communication, to augment purposeful language use and to enhance of positive attitudes toward English learning (Fageeh, 2011; Wu, 2006). Accordingly, a "tutor blog" was created with different activities to encourage students to use the target language based on the premises stated by some authors about the usefulness of blogs in the EFL process. This paper will focus on the English blog as a strategy for language exposure and will discuss the findings according to the analysis of its impact in the foreign language process.

Literature Review

Blogging in education

Blogs are similar to web sites in that they contain links to be explored and other standard features; including videos, music, chatting and profiles among others. An important characteristic of blogs, however, is that they contain postings, which are text entries, similar to a diary or journal, which include a posting date and may contain comments by people. A blog is a type of journal which is associated with internet applications to post information. In blogs people are allowed to navigate freely according to their interests. Moreover a typical edublog, a type of blog, combines oral and written text, images, photos, videos, and even links for connecting with other similar sites or important blogs. An edublog can be seen as a possibility for offering a reader knowledge and culture.

There are three kinds of edublogs, the class blog, the learner blog and the tutor blog. In the class blog, both students and teachers can post any kind of information and make comments about them. The learner blog makes reference to a personal journal that each student builds on the web. In the tutor blog, as its name implies, the teacher acts as the tutor or administrator, posting the activities and content related to a lesson's specific purpose and syllabus (Campbell Model, 2003, p. 2-3)

For this study, a tutor blog was created to offer students the opportunity to discuss topics outside of the classroom where every learner has an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. The blog

manager in this case provides the activities in the blog which offer some authentic reading, writing and listening skills practice. Wu (2006, pp. 72-73) states that "the weblog is a new arrival as an educational technology (...) it has more advanced and convenient unique features and functions in comparison with other tools in education."

Thus, the tutor blog provides focused opportunities for language exposure and practice, provides verbal language exchange and class information and encourages knowledge exploration. The idea being that the more contact with the target language, the more opportunities learners have for language practice. Ismail, (1991, pp. 2-3) points out that "the role of language contact is a determining issue for success of the foreign language learning process; the exposure is directly proportional to the development of language abilities". Edublogs may enhance personal learning and teaching process through one's own experiences. They may provide immediate feedback, personalized learning styles and enhance participation according to their needs and desires (Nguyen, 2008, p. 135). For EFL teachers, blogs can be used to inform students about class requirements, post handouts and give homework assignments which may support language learning process in different ways as stated by some authors. Nguyen, for example argues that "internet technology facilitates the ten principles of critical pedagogy introduced by Crookes and Lerner (1998), learners perceive, reflect and act on it". Students accept and comprehend language easily when they use computers. In terms of syllabus design and materials development, the author continues by saying that "blogs

can be considered as an opportunity for an active learning process that can stimulate and motivate students for being closer to their language learning process, due to its interactive nature” (2008, p. 139).

Through the use of blogs, learners can read, observe, listen and comment as they are attentive to others’ comments. They can include new postings with their teachers’ help and they can have access to other related networking sites which provide them with opportunities for personal language improvement. Blogs seem to be a suitable tool for teachers because they provide students with practice designed to enhance their receptive and productive skills.

Virtual learning environment

Virtual interactive learning has changed learning by offering students meaningful content designed to allow to personalize the learning experience through the use of flexible tools and resources managed, not only by the teacher, but also by the learner (Harwood, 2010). It is closely related to Ausubel’s (1983) theory of “meaningful learning.” In this vein, it relates to the adequate pedagogical framework, strategies and techniques that make knowledge profitable and facilitate the language learning process. That is why main users and learners of online materials change their role; they do not merely reproduce knowledge but instead they produce their own and participate according to their needs and desires; thus, students’ role is transformed into the role of active participant. Students have the chance to interpret and analyze learning according to their own experience. They have unfettered

access to resources and content so they can work at their own pace. Students not only learn from teachers, they also learn from classmates and from class resources which are transformed into meaningful input (Cuesta, 2010, p. 198).

EFL learners operate independently, hence they can individualize their learning according to their way of analyzing, interpreting and acting in relation to different information and emerging situations, thus transforming the teacher into a process facilitator. This process is replicated in classroom practices as well as outside of it. Gros & Silva assert that “technology builds chains between teaching and learning in the online and state process in the classroom” (2005, p.11).

Computers facilitate the gathering of information as well as the provision of opportunities for communication and language development. Teachers as guides, who support the learning process, help learners to get in contact with different kinds of information. This information is explored by learners as they build their own meaning and knowledge. In this sense, virtual learning focuses on discovering rather than instruction. This might make knowledge apprehension purposeful leading pupils to take responsibility for their own goals. In addition, students are likely to develop individual strategies while teachers help them to identify values and ways of learning. Beer, Clark & Jones state that “online learning environment facilitates the interactions required for learning and therefore have an influence on students engagement” (2010, p.76). This is why; blogging is considered a way to develop

English skills and to access technological tools.

Exposure and second language learning

EFL learning process is a challenging, not only for rural area students, but also for teachers. The difficulties arise from a lack of student exposure to the target language, their low interest in taking a more active role in the process limited time for completing lessons. Learners are not often exposed to “primary linguistic data” (Ismail, 1991), meaning language input is presented in small doses for a few hours a week. For instance an appropriate lab is not made available to students and feel like they do not have opportunity to use language. In this sense, using EFL edublogs could be an innovative tool to motivate students to participate in their own language learning process.

The World Wide Web (internet) is a source of content which allows for interaction among students, teachers and the target language. Likewise it could be used as a window to the world outside the classroom, thus presenting different types of relevant materials which teachers could take advantage of in multiple ways according to students’ necessities and desires. Nguyen also states that “authentic material and language is easily available for EFL language learning and teaching of the web” (2008, p. 135). Varied materials and communication enhance students’ participation and language awareness.

Another important aspect of working with technology is that this resource can enhance free and spontaneous language development. In self-directed virtual

environments language is not taught or guided directly; students have the chance to exercise and build their reading, listening, and comprehension abilities. Based on Vigosky’s ideas, McLeod (2007, p.10) asserts that “language is a faculty of human beings, it is a result of a willful desire of interaction and communication, and people in general use it for a specific purpose”. Similarly to the first language acquisition process, learners do not use language unless they need it for a specific task; in this way, they acquire, correct and reinforce aspects of language through actual interactions.

Research Design

Context and participants

This pedagogical experience was carried out in a rural school called: “Luis Manuel Parra Caro” located in Sativa Norte, Boyacá. The participants were eighth and ninth graders whose ages range from 15 to 17 years of age. They worked actively on the activities proposed, in and out of class. The school’s main objective is to teach students using an integrative teaching practice, so they can become member of society. Thus, language itself must be learned from a variety of communicative approaches in order to augment students’ personal language development. Likewise the school seeks to enhance students’ ability to use technology as an academic tool for gathering information and knowledge.

Type of study

According to the nature of this pedagogical experience, a qualitative- interpretive case

study was developed. In this vein, the study was developed considering the local social reality of the context under study and knowing the way by which it was constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher was a participant-observer interested in examining a unit of analysis related to the usefulness of edublogs in rural students' EFL practice in Sativa Norte. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences and how they construct knowledge as well as meanings through what they live (Merriam, 2009).

"Qualitative research involves analyzing and interpreting texts and describing patterns of a phenomenon" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p.7). This study was explorative and interpretative since it was an initial inquiry into the topic and I intend to provide possible explanations for the phenomenon in question. Accordingly, Merriam, (2009) states that reality is socially constructed; that is, that there are multiple interpretations of a single observable aspect and within the exploration and observation, researchers may construct knowledge and explanations of different phenomenon.

Data collection instruments

The primary data for this study consisted of students' comments regarding their experience when participating in the EFL blog by means of narratives. Scholars also called these narratives "testimonials." Quick notes presented in an anecdotal way are also described as "narrative/anecdotal approach" and refer to participants' narrative report of what was done during a lesson and their opinions and comments. Students

expressed their comments and reactions using short paragraphs (25 students). The students' artifacts, in this case students' blog production, was used for data analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) state that any kind of students' production can be employed as a main resource to assess students' performance.

Instructional design

Regarding the pedagogical intervention, the edublog was based on "ADDIE's model" as a required plan for online course materials, analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation stages, (Cuesta, 2010, p.183). In the initial stage some interviews were conducted to establish students' needs and desires. The analysis revealed that there was a need for opportunities to use the language outside the classroom and that there was a lack of exposure to the target language.

The project was carried out in three main stages. First, the creation of the EFL web blog for the school and the documentation process concerning the target issue; second, the socialization and implementation of the blog structure within the school community; third, the analysis of students' narratives about their experience when using the EFL blog. Permanent evaluation has been carried out regarding content and strategies to reshape the EFL blog when necessary, so that students maintain interest in working on answering posts.

Taking into consideration the previous perspective, it was necessary to look for opportunities in which students could be in contact with the target language and they could use it to communicate in a relevant

way. Thus a “Tutor Blog” was created as pedagogical mediation: <http://lumapark-englishday.blogspot.com/2011/05/blog-post.html>. This study set was used to analyze the impact this pedagogical tool could have in the foreign language learning process.

The activities that were posted on the blog had to do with school events videos and photos. Students commented about these events. In addition, karaoke videos of English songs worked within classes, some videos of short funny tales and educative videos which were used for homework also

became part of the resources integrated to the blog. The blog was part of a bigger project called, “My school is connected to English”.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the process suggested by Taylor, Powell & Marcus: understanding, valuing, categorizing, tracing connections, interpreting and concluding concepts and comments (2003, p. 2-5). After collecting data, the process of analysis started by considering raw data and ended by integrating theoretical narratives to build the categories as the next figure displays.

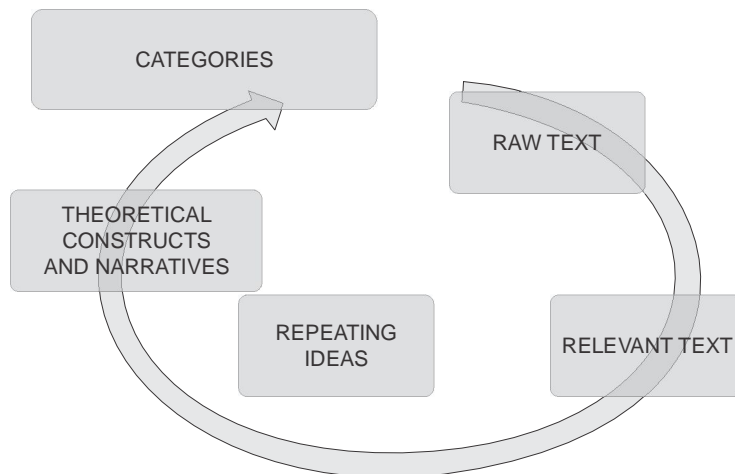


Figure 1. Data Analysis Procedure.

Findings and Discussions

Generally, the pedagogical experience, examined using an explorative study, reveals that in spite of some difficulties, i.e. time constrains, internet accessibility and connectivity, the blogs became a useful strategy to expose participants to the English

language. The three main aspects which emerged from the analysis are explained below according to students’ perceptions and comments. By using EFL blogs, students were in contact with the language and this led students to increase their engagement and language awareness which facilitated their EFL language learning.

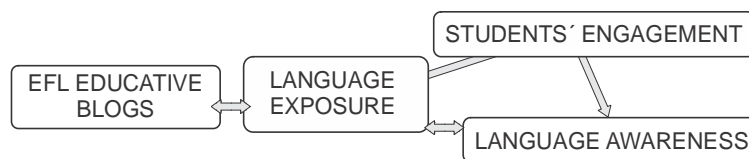


Figure 2. Findings

Student's engagement

There are a number of definitions of “engagement.” Some of these include references to participation, motivation, academic goals and behaviors learners develop through different stages of a learning process in an isolated way. And according to the blogging experience analysis, all of those aspects are related to the concept of “engagement”. These aspects support one another. The different behaviors that learners’ exhibit, like attendance, motivation, attitudes and aptitudes, can be an indicator of teaching quality in the learning task and academic achievement as well (Beer, Clark & Jones, 2010, p. 76).

At the beginning of the process students exhibited some resistance to participation; learners regarded the computer as a work tool which posed certain difficulties when they tried to use it. It was not a resource for learning and enjoyment. Most of them had limited technology skills and their access to internet was limited. Only some of them had internet access or even computers at home; while the school lab had limited internet access too. Nevertheless; with the passage of time, students showed an increasing level

of interest and asked for help in order to participate in the blog activities; some students only listened to the videos and music while others commented them.

Learners were encouraged to participate in the EFL blog. They showed interest and argued that through entering the blog they could establish certain kind of communication because they looked forward to seeing what was new there. Learners stated that blogging was useful and entertaining and it could contribute to their learning in a variety of ways, such as providing opportunities for increasing vocabulary learning, reinforcing grammatical aspects, and improving language as well as technological skills: “... I liked to comment in the blog and I learn English and technology and vocabulary with the blog and my friends...” (Excerpt taken from N.4)¹

The data indicates that students believe they learnt from the material and from their classmates. They said that the blogging experience motivates and facilitates the learning process which echoes Cuesta’s statement: “technology should be the means by which educational processes are enhanced”. She points out that, by means

Translations by the author:

¹ “...me gusto comentar en el blog y aprendo English y technology y vocabulario con el blog y mis amigos...”

of blogging, pupils learn from their teacher and classmates because blogging becomes a potential aid for involving students in language learning outside the classroom, (2010, p. 186). Similarly this participant commented: "... *I learned from my classmates and the videos because I understood something they were saying and that makes me happy...*" (Excerpt taken from N. 2) ²

Some students also stated that it was important for them to see photos and videos edited by themselves. Learners were engaged with the visual and audio material. They stated that the videos and songs were relevant for them and they had the intention to continue blogging because they wanted to observe what was new.

Language awareness

Blogs and other social networking sites provide new opportunities for language awareness and encourage students to participate by providing comments. Thus, they use and produce language through meaningful activities. Students also said that blogging was an interesting opportunity to exchange information with peers outside the classroom, without paying attention to time and place constrains: "*I like to write in the blog and besides I can read the comments and see the videos several times when I want...*" (Excerpt taken from N. 16).³

The role of input and output is highlighted throughout students' voices: students said

it was nice to watch videos and read the comments many times; they understood the meaning through the images and they also used it to communicate their ideas. Students were worried about their language skills when commenting; they made use of different strategies like using dictionaries, using internet tools, asking for help, and imitation. In addition, they made use of language from the videos or classmates' comments to communicate in the target language suggesting that this blogging activity encouraged them to be in charge of their own learning at solving language problems to fulfill the desire for participation: "... *I searched in the internet and I understood some expressions of the videos which I watched many times and then I tried to write with my words what I wanted people read.*" (Excerpt taken from N. 12). ⁴

By using blogs students begin a process of language improvement and they can be more motivated. Aljumah (2012, p. 101), says that "blogging motivates writing", so that, "blogging exposes students to a wider audience for their writing". Blogs also promote comfortable interaction for students because they are in control of their writing confirming that publishing encourages them to aim at producing high quality texts. (Zhang, 2009, p. 69).

Students argued that blogging is an interesting English practice activity, because they felt free to participate with comments; made their own effort, using different strategies to express what they wanted, and

² "...aprendí de mis compañeros y de los videos porque entendí algunas cosas que estaban diciendo y eso me pone contenta..."

³ "me gusta escribir en el blog y además puedo leer los comentarios y ver los videos varias veces cuando quiera".

⁴ "busque en el internet y entendí algunas expresiones de los videos que vi muchas veces y luego trate de escribir con mis palabras lo que yo quería que leyeran".

felt that error corrections were not the focus of the activities. In the blogging platform teachers forget about teaching the language. However, they observe and monitor the process and students take charge of their own personal language learning process (Dieu, 2004, p. 27). The author also remarks that “blogs work best as a long term assignment that help students to improve their overall fluency and competency, not just as a standalone activity”.

This kind of language awareness helps students to become more responsible in their language learning, blogs facilitate practice and negotiation of meaning, and it enhances students’ independence from teachers’ control. Blogs can be a very valuable pedagogical tool that may promote student-centered learning shifting from passive to active participation. (Cuesta, 2010, p. 189).

Bloggng provides for opportunities to acquire language through experience and practice. Learners had direct contact with language within meaningful communicative activities and contextualized meaning. Pedagogical practices move beyond classroom language assignments. Zhang, states that “blogs enrich learning experience and provide an opportunity for learners to shift from surface to deeper levels of learning” (2009, p. 63). In addition, self-assessment is understood as a part of language awareness. Students reviewed their blog entries after publishing and they recognized they made mistakes and some of them even corrected them.

Language exposure

Some of the students made use of only one internet tool, translators. They were not very mindful of their language use; they only wanted to complete their homework and they did not pay attention to language use, grammar and vocabulary. Conversely, other students valued working with the blog because they had the opportunity to be in contact with the language: “... *in the bloggng I used translator, but I understood some things from videos and I reinforced the songs that we learned in lessons... I learned with the translator, too*”. (Except taken from N 16).⁵

Language exposure is considered as a very important for foreign language learners. Direct contact with the target language can prepare students to exercise their receptive and productive skills, making their understanding and production easier. By bloggng in English, students had varied opportunities to be exposed to the target language and they chose what to comment guided by their own personal desires. Students could check the blog to read comments from classmates and made an effort to write appropriately their own. They watched videos and had time to navigate through other links related to the target language. Fageeh, asserts that blogs are considered as “an available genuine context for EFL learners who have limited opportunities to be exposed to the target language in an authentic environment” (2011, p. 32-33). With the use of the blog

⁵ *En el bloggng utilize traductor, pero entendí algunas cosas de los videos y repase las canciones que aprendimos en clase... con el traductor aprendí también...*

students had the opportunity to access other similar edublogs whose activities they enjoyed.

Learners highlighted the importance of language exposure since most students are not usually exposed to the target language; they mostly had contact with English in the classroom and rarely outside of it and they considered blogging was a good strategy for listening:

“it was good to listen in English to improve pronunciation and the pronunciation gets better listening several times”. (Excerpt taken from N 17).⁶

“...the part of the videos and the songs were important since in my house I don't have a computer and I don't listen to anything in English...” (Excerpt taken from N 20).⁷

Through constant exposure to the language, students began to understand some linguistic aspects, and working with the blog helped them to reinforce some grammar rules and increased their vocabulary. Students generally spoke the target language in the classroom, but they rarely spoke the language anywhere else. Therefore technological presentations could aid in exposing learners to the foreign language thus facilitating their learning process, (Higgins, 2009).

To conclude, the analysis and interpretation of the data shows, mainly, two important aspects: that the use of an EFL blog as a classroom practice outside the classroom

can enhance a student's language learning process. Learners become more responsible and demonstrate a high interest in their own participation. By means of their work with a blog, students are offered greater exposure to the language, and this exposure may help them to better understand some language aspects.

Conclusions

The 21st century teacher needs to be aware of the shifting conceptions of language learning and teaching. The role of the teacher should still be important in regards to selecting, designing and providing students with opportunities and activities to meet their goals and engage their interests. It is necessary to work with relevant topics and activities that catch students' attention. Aljumah (2012) points out that a weblog is one of the new applications on the web 2.0. This application provides genuine language use because it is the type of activity people become involved in real life. So that, teaching must focus on what to learn and what for to learn.

Clearly students must be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies and that they must have a dynamic role in the pedagogical process. It is expected that learners will construct individual knowledge through different information resources. Online teaching opportunities must be centered on learners while teachers act as tutors and facilitators. Blogs provide educational benefits, like giving students opportunities to express themselves and

⁶ *“... fue bueno escuchar en inglés para mejorar pronunciación y la pronunciación se mejora escuchando varias veces”.*

⁷ *“... la parte de los videos y canciones fueron importantes ya que en mi casa no tengo computador y no escuchamos nada en inglés...”.*

reflect upon their and others' comments. By incorporating blogs in language teaching and learning process, the teacher can guide students in building their understanding and train themselves to making greater use of technological tools. The authentic and readily available language presented in blog materials is one of the potential pedagogical benefits of using technology in education. Blogs offer endless possibilities for exposing students to the target language. EFL blogging can guarantee free access to information and varied opportunities for language production.

In regards to the research question, "how can an EFL blog, as a language exposure platform benefit students' learning process and objectives?", it is possible to say that the kind of edublog, discussed in this research article, benefits in great measure the pedagogical process. It provides opportunities to encounter language varieties and incidentally, students are exposed to language produce by speakers whose English is their first, second or foreign language. Despite the limitations that blogging can pose for language learners, blogs can support students' engagement and language awareness which are crucial aspects of the language development process.

Pedagogical Implications

Although there are many successful methods for supporting language learning, and each one of these methods exposes learners to language in different ways, technology could contribute by providing students with useful linguistic input. This input goes beyond the classroom. Lessons

can be full of comprehensible presentations involving the target language but that is not enough. Students' learning opportunities need to be reinforced through other practice opportunities.

The World Wide Web is changing, not only does it give us access to information but it allows for interaction which promotes the creation and sharing of information rooted in specific contexts. Thusly, education needs a focus on literacy skills, language and technology, and education should prepare learners for new challenges and offer them the skills and abilities needed to be successful in our changing world. Therefore planning, creating and adopting an EFL blog can offer different ways of introducing and encouraging learners to continue learning and to be motivated for language use and language awareness beyond the classroom.

It is important to highlight that the main benefit offered to students was enhanced input and practice of their receptive skills within a process of language exposure and learner engagement. It is also relevant for this study to highlight some important aspects to improve when this kind of projects are implemented. For instance, teachers need to work to ensure that sufficient feedback about comments are provided in order to provide additional opportunities for language use. In this project, it was evident that there were not enough chains of interaction among students. Therefore, as part of the teacher's role, it is important to apply strategies like correcting before posting, to plan assessment strategies with a specific criterion, to drill some editing skills and to provide more chains of interaction. It is also necessary to continue working to

keep students' motivation for free participation in the way of comments. It is also crucial to bear in mind that it is an ongoing process where consistency and innovation are imperative.

References

- Aljumah, F. H. (2012). Saudi learner perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blogs in teaching English writing course for EFL Majors at Qassim University. *English Language Teaching*, 5(1), p100.
- Auerbach, C. & Silverstein, L. (2003). Qualitative data. An introduction to coding and analysis: Coding the mechanics (31-76). New York: New York University Press.
- Ausubel, Novak-H. (1983). *Psicología educativa; Un punto de vista cognositivo*. México: Trillas.
- Beer, c, Clark, k. and Jones, D. (2010, p. 76). Indicators of engagement. Ascilite Sydney. Retrieved from: <http://ascilite.org.au/conferences/sydney10/procs/Beer-full.pdf>.
- Campbell, A.P. (2003). Weblogs for use with ESL classes. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 9(2), 1-3. Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html>.
- Cuesta L. (2010). The Design and development of online course materials: Some features and recommendations. *Profile Issues in Teacher Professional Development*. 12(1), 182-189.
- Dieu, B. (2004). Practice view: Blogs for language learning. *Tesol Essential Teacher*, 1(4), 26-30.
- Fageeh, A. I. (2011). EFL learners use of blogging for developing writing skills and enhanced attitudes towards English learning: An explorative study. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 2(1), 32-33.
- Gros, B., & Silva, J. (2005). La formación del profesorado como docentes en los espacios virtuales de aprendizaje. *Revista iberoamericana de educación*, 36(1), 1-13.
- Harwood, C. (2010). Using blogs to practice grammar editing skills. *English Language Teaching World Online*, 2, 1-13.
- Higgins, J.G. (2009) Language Exposure-The Easy Way to Learn Spanish. Ezine@rticles. Retrieved from: http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=Jonathan_g_Higgins.
- Ismail, J. (1991). Language exposure and second language learning. *The English Teacher*, 20, 20-31.
- McMillan, J. (2001). *Research in Education. A Conceptual Introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Merriam, S. (2009). Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation. Jossey-Bass.
- McLeod, S.A. (2007). Lev Vigotsky. Retrieved from: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>.
- Nguyen, L. V. (2008). Technology-enhanced EFL syllabus design and materials development. *English Language Teaching*, 1(2), 135-139.
- Taylor, E., Powell & Marcus, R. (2003).

Analyzing Qualitative Data. Program Development and Evaluation. University of Wisconsin_Cooperative extension Madison Wisconsin. Retrieved from: http://learningstore.uwexedu/assets/pdfs/g3658_12.

Wu, C. (2006). Blogs in TEFL: A New Promising Vehicle. *Online Submission*, 3(5), 69-73.

Zhang, D. (2009). The application of blog in English writing. *Journal of Cambridge studies*, 4(1), 64-72.

THE AUTHOR

ROSA MARÍA AMADO CEPEDA is a language teacher. She is a M.A. candidate in foreign language teaching at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC). Currently, she is working at a rural school in Sativanorte Boyacá.