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**Objetivo de la revista Enletawa Journal:**

Con la revista ENLETAWA JOURNAL, se pretende divulgar la producción escritural en respuesta a la cualificación docente del pensamiento científico, mediante la muestra de diversos avances y resultados de los procesos investigativos que realizan cada una de las diferentes cohortes de la Maestría en Docencia de Idiomas.

De igual manera, se busca que, tanto magistrandos, docentes adscritos al programa y demás miembros de la comunidad académica, se conviertan en difusores efectivos de cada una de las líneas de investigación, mediante la promoción de espacios escriturales que redunden a un ambiente altamente calificado.

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# Editorial

Welcome to the sixth edition of our Journal. As it is known, ENLETAWA Journal is a space where pre-service and in-service teachers as well as researchers and novice researchers share their pedagogical, research and reflective experiences in regards to English, French and Spanish teaching and learning concerns. These issues have been the center of their wondering in different Colombian Contexts.

Most of the papers we want to share with you, in this edition, emerged from the reflective practices teacher researchers carry out based on their own teaching practices. 1“Reflective teaching is based on the assumption that teachers can improve their understanding of teaching and the quality of their own teaching by reflecting critically on their teaching experiences”. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002 pp. 451).

Thanks to them, this number presents the results of different research studies where dialogue journals, intercultural competence, critical pedagogy, students’ reflections, among others are explored. Those areas or topics account for current trends in Language Teaching.

The sixth issue of ENLETAWA Journal has been organized around research reports including pedagogical experiences, reflections and creative papers. In that sense, you will find five research reports, a pedagogical experience, a literature review article and three critical reflective papers. At the end, some ongoing research papers and some essays from languages students based on academic writing are presented.

This number starts with a research report about the analysis of students’ English writing development through dialogue journals. The following article shares with us the process and results of an a priori study focused on materials design throughout the implementation of some curricular units based on the development of intercultural dimensions. Then, two M.A Candidates report a study where they explore and analyze the characteristics of first graders language awareness.

In the next paper two university teachers report a small scale study that revealed the perceptions Technology and Industrial Administration students have about their English language learning. To close this session, a PhD candidate shares an overview about cooperative learning as another way of learning together in the English classes.

Next, a pedagogical experience reveal us that one of the possibilities in which the reality of a language is manifested, is through expressions used by native speakers to describe particular situations of the context.

The literature review, contained in the seventh article, compiles and discusses the most relevant issues in relation to the definition of critical pedagogy, education as reproduction, English language and critical pedagogy, critical pedagogy into practice, the role of the teacher, and the incorporation of critical pedagogy in the classroom.



Then we have two reflective papers. In the first one, the author proposes a reflection about the traditional and the alternative as two trends in the field of language teacher education. The author favors a humanist and critical approach to explain a vision of education as a social practice. The second one deals with the idea that being a teacher today embraces new challenges and possibilities for pre-service and in-service teachers as well as for prospective teachers and their contexts in order to enrich and/ or transform educational practices.

The last reflective paper provides some general considerations about language death. The author offers language teachers relevant issues about languages extinction and resurrection.

As you can observe, we have multiple and varied topics in this issue. This edition has been possible thanks to the Editorial Review Board and Scientific Committee for their cooperation and participation in the peer review process. Your help and support have been very important to maintain the quality of our journal. Thanks to your comments and suggestions, ENLETAWA Journal is on the road to achieve the profile scientific publications should have in order to accomplish the national and international standards.

Lastly, the sixth edition of the ENLETAWA Journal has been carefully prepared as all the previous editions. Undoubtedly our readers will enjoy and reflect upon all the pedagogical practices presented in this issue. I invite all pre-service, in-service teachers, researchers and novice researchers to continue participating with your products in the coming editions.

*María Teresa Esteban Núñez*  
Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia  
In charge Journal Editor

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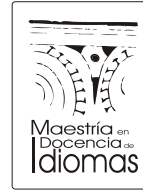
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## DIALOGUE JOURNALS: A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY TO ANALYZE STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

This paper reports on the findings of a small - scale research project carried out in a public school in Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia. It aims at analyzing how students' English writing was developed through dialogue journals. Data collection instruments included students' journals, interviews and teachers' observation formats. Findings revealed that students developed English writing by following models and using code switching as a communicative strategy.

**Key words:** Dialogue journals, writing, strategies

### **Resumen**

Este documento reporta los resultados de un proyecto de investigación a menor escala, llevado a cabo en un colegio público en Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia. Los instrumentos que se utilizaron para recolectar información incluyeron diarios de los estudiantes, una entrevista y formatos de observación. Los resultados mostraron que la escritura en inglés de los estudiantes se desarrolló a través de seguir modelos y utilizar el cambio de código como estrategia comunicativa.

**Palabras clave:** Diarios de dialogo, escritura, estrategias

## Introduction

Writing has been considered as a language skill that helps students improve their linguistic and communicative competences. Viáfara (2008) asserts that there are many approaches for teaching writing skills. One of them is related to controlled techniques where teachers focus on accuracy, correcting, spelling, order and grammar. Another one is known as controlled-to-free approach which allows students to develop fluency over accuracy. In most Colombian High schools, teachers focus on the controlled technique. It does not allow the fluency in students' writings because they pay too much attention to the grammar components and they do not write what they want to express. Considering the previous aspect, the researchers used dialogue journals as a pedagogical strategy to give students the opportunity to express and share their feelings, thoughts, views of the world, culture, identity, beliefs in a free-way, and at the same time to analyze how their writing was developed.

## Statement of the Problem

The authors of this document have observed that in their teaching experiences at high schools students have many difficulties and problems when they write. One of them is that when students write, they pay too much attention to the grammar part and this does not allow them to express what they want to say and thus writing and English as a language become boring for them. For this reason, it is very important to implement different strategies in which they can express their thoughts while forgetting the grammar part and focusing on the message

that they want to send. Based on the abovementioned aspects, we posed the following research question for his project. What does the use of dialogue journals tell us about students' writing development?

## Research Setting and Participants

### Context

This study was carried out at a public school located in Tunja, Boyacá-Colombia. This public high school is located in the urban zone. This school has 4300 students from kindergarten to eleventh grade. The school is a technical school and it specializes in four areas: Business, Arts, Health and Sciences. Then, the English component is not very strong.

### Participants

The population of this research project was two classes from eighth grade. The first group (8-1) is a group of 35 students, 21 girls and 14 boys, who range from 12 to 16 years old. They take two English classes per week. And the second group (8-7) is a group of 36 students, 23 girls, 13 boys who range from 12 to 17 years old. They take one hour of English Workshop class per week. For the purpose of this study, we applied all nine workshops with the 35 students, but we selected a sample of 10 students of each group.

### Literature Review

In this small scale research, the main concern was to analyze what happens in terms of writing development when dialogue journals are used. In order to achieve this

goal, the following concepts were studied: writing, free writing, journals, benefits of journals, dialogue journals and benefits of dialogue journals.

## Writing

Considering the fact that as Viáfara (2008, p.76) argues “a comfortable, non-threatening and supportive environment to write is considered essential in this process as it is in the communicative approach” , in this small-scale research the researchers wanted students to see writing as an instrument to reflect upon their own thought process of interpreting the world that embraces them. In this connection, learners attribute personal meaning to the social learning and use of writing as a social practice (Lerner, 2001).

Some researchers that have been interested in this free writing process and believe that this kind of writing improves not only improve students' communicative competence but also students writing fluency. Hurtado (2010) proposed a project called *Creative Writing* as a pedagogical strategy to improve 7th graders' written discourse competence. Creative writing is described as a chance to experiment freely with the language and helps to develop an efficient composing process in a meaningful environment. In this project, the findings revealed student's improvements through the use of strategies to produce more coherent and cohesive texts. Furthermore, the findings indicate students' improvement in written productions, which was characterized by the use of discourse elements throughout the body of the text.

Furthermore, Quevedo (2008) mentions in her research the need to bridge the gap between the traditional teaching practices of writing with a socio-critical dimension of this skill. The author mentions that it is after writing and exploring narratives that students are encouraged to manifest their voices, keeping in mind the social component and implications of the facts that surround them, and, hopefully, give an account of their decision and life stories in order to foster their writing as a social practice when assuming a critical view of the world around them.

## Journals

Brown (2002) asserts that journals are very informal diaries about their own feelings and thoughts as they are studying English. Genesse & Upshur (1999) confirm journals as an important instrument to collect data, they are a way of collecting information and students are responsible of that tool because they write as they please without any control of accuracy.

Genesse & Upshur (1999) further present a number of benefits of journals:

1. They provide useful information for the individualizing instruction, which let students to create new learning strategies, attitudes, interests and expectations about themselves.
2. Journals increase opportunities for functional communication between students and teachers. It lets improve the rapport in which students and teachers have the opportunity to interact more than they usually use.
3. They give students opportunities to use

a language for genuine communication and personalized reading. Journals help students to develop their writing skill as free practice and at the same time their reading skill in a personal way.

4. They permit teachers to individualize language teaching by modeling writing in their responses to student journals. Teacher must guide students' writing by giving them examples with teachers' writings as a model.
5. They promote the development of certain writing skill. Students could develop free writing and their own style.
6. They enhance student's involvement in, and ownership of learning. Students became more conscious about their own learning.

### **Dialogue journals**

This kind of journal, according to Peyton (2000) is a written conversation in which a student and teacher communicate regularly (daily, weekly, etc., depending on the educational setting) over a semester, scholar year, or course. Students write as much as they choose and the teacher writes back regularly, introducing new topics, responding to students' questions and comments or asking questions. The teacher is a participant in an ongoing, written conversation with the student, rather than an evaluator who corrects or comments on the student's writing.

In dialogue journals, teachers do not pay attention to the accuracy, punctuation, spelling and so on but they have to guide students by giving examples. Teachers will not grade students' productions so for these reason students are free and relaxed to write

what they feel and perceive. "Teachers do not call attention to or correct errors in dialogue journals, but rather model correct English" (Datzman, 2010, p. 13).

### **Benefits of dialogue journal**

There have been some studies about dialogue journals and most of them show the benefits of dialogue journals. According to Garmon's research in 2001 (p. 41-45), there are six different benefits of dialogue journals:

- Facilitating learning of the course: journals seemed to facilitate students' learning of the course material. Students identified several ways in which they believed that the journal served to enhance their learning.
- Promoting self-reflection and self-understanding: students felt that, without the journal, they would not have thought about the course material as much as they did outside of class. Being required to think more deeply about the material led them to better understanding and often to new insights. Furthermore, the opportunity that the journal provided for making connections between the course material and their own beliefs and experiences was also important to some students.
- Procedural conveniences and benefits: Many of the students appreciated the fact that the journal writing was informal; they considered it advantageous that they did not have to be concerned about grammar, spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure. In addition, a few students

perceived the length requirement of the journal as appropriate and beneficial.

- Opportunity to express ideas: dialogue journals provided a regular opportunity for students to express their ideas about the issues being dealt with in the course. Some explained that, because there was never enough time during class for everyone to say all that they wanted to, the journal provided a place where they could say what they did not have the chance to say during class. Others who were less outspoken in class saw the journal as their opportunity to express ideas that they were reluctant to express orally in class.
- Getting feedback on ideas and questions: The journal was also a place where the students asked any questions they had about the material being covered. Being able to ask questions through their journal was especially helpful to students who were shy and less inclined to raise a question before the entire class.
- Improving the teacher-student relationship: students seemed to value the teacher-student interaction that took place through the journals. They felt that building a good, personal relationship between teacher and student was important and they saw their journal as one means of doing so.

## Research Method

The approach that we used was qualitative. The kind of research we worked with was action research. According to Carr & Kemmis (1986, p. 30):

“...action research is a form of self-reflective inquire undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out”.

## Data Collection Instruments

First, an important element was the collection students' journals. Then, as the second instrument, field notes were taken during all the writing sessions through the observations of the researchers. In that sense, they gathered information about student's attitudes to writing activities and significant moments that called the researchers' attention. Finally, a survey which contained seven questions, was taken by all of the students. This instrument helped the researchers to gather information about students' journal writing experience.

## Pedagogical Design

The pedagogical design was based on Peyton (2000, p. 4-6) and followed what the author suggested in terms of the logistics that are involved in the use of journals:

- *Materials:* during the classes the students developed the work on pieces of paper to collect at the end of the class, in order to put together and obtain the final journal.
- *Frequency of writing:* Both groups wrote twice a week in their English class with the three writing stages taking two hours.
- *Length of writing:* the researchers did not give the students a specific length of

writing. All the sessions they wrote without rules of polishes pieces or determined amount of writing, all the time the extension of the text was up to them.

- *Writing instructions and topics:* before starting each stage, the researchers informed and explained to the students what they had to do. They were always with them during all the process of writing. They were told that they had to be participating in a continuing written conversation. They could write on the particular topic related to the model of the text that was given to them. They were also told that teachers were not going to correct errors.
- *Journal partners:* From the beginning of

the research process, we asked them to choose a partner, who was their partner in the writing process during the sessions. It is important to note that all of them had the same English level.

### Conditions for the Implementation

Each workshop was divided in three stages: pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing. In the first stage, students read the model text given by the teacher and after they underlined the unknown vocabulary and look for their meaning. In the next stage, students begin to write about a topic related to the reading. In the last stage, students exchanged their writings with his/her partner and each one of them wrote a comment or suggestion in his/her partner's production.

**Table 1.** Summary of workshops chart

The following table summarizes the topics and the aims of each one of the journals.		
N° Workshop	Title	Aim
1	Who I am and who my partner is	To describe who I am and who my partner is.
2	My hero	To write about a member of my family that I consider is my hero.
3	My grandmother's birthday	To describe the best birthday of my life.
4	My plans for next weekend	To write and describe what my plans are for next weekend.
5	I wonder about my future	To describe my plans for my future in four years.
6	My wonderful trip	To describe the plans of my next vacation.
7	I want to break up with my boyfriend	To write and describe a situation where I felt in trouble.
8	Let's party	To write a situation where I describe the things that I have to do if I want to go out.
9	The duties of my profession	To write and describe the duties of my profession.

## Findings

The process of data collection took six months. After reading the data and analyzing it using the grounded approach, a category

and a subcategory was found. The following chart shows the main question, the category and subcategory that emerged during the data analysis process.

**Table 2.** Research question, categories and subcategories

Main question	Categories	Subcategories
What does the use of dialogue journals tell us about students'	Following models writing development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using code switching</li> </ul>

### First category: Following models

Answering the main question, the category that surfaced was: "following models". When students were in the while writing stage, they followed the structure of the text (Introduction, body, and conclusion). They wrote with the same vocabulary used in the text, just adding personal information. It was made clear through the instruments used.

During the analysis of the journals, the following example was found which shows the model text and the students writing production. The next text was given by the researchers:

*Hi again! My name is Alejo. I am in eighth grade of high school and I was wondering about my future in four years. The first question on my mind is what will I do when I finish my school? And my plans are: I will study medicine at the university. I will be the best doctor in the world. I will save people and I will help them when they will heal diseases (Journal N. 1).*

The next examples were found in the student's journals:

*Hi! My name is xxxx. I am in eighth grade of high school, and I was wondering about my future in four years. My plans are I will study veterinary in the university. I will be the best veterinary. I will cure the animals and I help the animals [sic] (S1, Journal. 1).*

*My name is: xxxx. I am in eighth grade of high school and I was wondering about my future in four years. The first question on my mind is what will I do when I finish my school? And my plans are: I will study medicine at the university. I will be the best doctora in the world. I will work hard because medicine is a profession that requires time and dedication [sic] (S3,Journal. 1).*

As one could see in both texts written by the students, they follow most of the lines that the model texts have. They copy the same structure of the sentences, the same vocabulary changing some words related to their lives and experiences depending on

the topic of the model text, the punctuation that appear in the example text, and also the same structure of the text: introduction, body and conclusion.

During the analysis of the surveys, we found some answers which affirm that students used model texts as a tool that help them to write with more fluency. The following answers in the survey found that most of students answered that they followed the model in their textual production. This can be observed in the following question:

*¿Los ejemplos dados le sirvieron como herramienta facilitadora para su producción escrita? (Second question of the survey).*

*“Gracias a esa herramienta pude guiarme y realizar los textos indicados y pude escribir mas.”*

(S5, s1).

*“Gracias a ellos tuvimos una mejor idea de que era un escrito y como se compone.”(S7,s1).*

In the previous answers, we could realize that there are some key words which guided us. On the one hand, that in the first answer the example text was a resource that helped them as a guide while they were writing their texts. On the other hand, in the second answer, we realized that students could know more about how a text is written. They began to recognize a whole text and identify the parts that composed it which helped them to begin, continue and finish their writing productions.

During the observations, we also realized that students continued following the models. It is evident in the notes that we

took in the observations of the students' behavior in the classroom activities during all the writing sessions. The following paragraph shows us a description taken from the researcher's field notes (April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013) about students writing based on models:

*Students began to write about themselves, their description (physical and as a human beings. Some of them write taking into account the model of the reading; it means the structure and what the external part of it involves. Some of them are concentrated in writing about them, taking into account the pre-reading activity [sic] (FN, R1).*

In this sense, some authors have stated some of the benefits of writing using models, an example of this are Maley and Duff (1989), who affirm that developing a writing using models, as opposed to purely expository writing, offers advantages for students. It builds learner confidence. Once the students have realized that they can produce successful writings, there is a qualitative leap in their motivation. The reader can see that one of the students mentioned he wanted to write more.

By changing students from observers, looking in, into participants, looking out, it helps give them a feel for what is involved in the constructions of texts. This direct experience of writing gives access to a kind of understanding of the writing process which no amount of indirect description can offer.

The next lines describe the subcategory that was found from the first category in the



analysis data. It is presented with support from student's journals, students' answers in the surveys and finally with researchers' observations.

### Using code switching

Code switching strategies were used by students in their writings in order to communicate their ideas in a successful way. When students follow the models, they used to include some words in their mother tongue, because they did not want to stop their fluency or lost their idea thinking about how to say a word in English. During the analysis of the journals, we found the following examples which show how students use vocabulary of their mother tongue in their written productions. The next example was taken from a class activity in which students were asked to write about a person they considered they hero.

*"She is my hero because he loves me and defends me to a pesar de scolding or punishment taugh meto be a person of wind ell I love and is my hero"*[sic] (J3, s7).

In the same way, another student used code-switching as a strategy while writing about her plans for future vacation time.

*"My plans for nex vacation to to everyday with my family cousin uncle and sobrinos to travel to Bogota or Moniquira to go to picina."*[sic] (J3, s10).

During the analysis of the surveys, we found some answers which affirm that students use vocabulary in their mother tongue, because they felt the necessity to include

these Spanish words to communicate fluently. This can be observed in the following question:

Durante sus producciones escritas, ¿se vio en la necesidad de incluir palabras en español para darse a entender?"

*"Si porque a veces no me podían entender bien"* (S3, S3).

*"Algunas veces me toca con palabras en español porque lo que yo quiero es escribir lo que yo pienso"* (S3, S1).

Trudgill (2000, p. 105) says that "speakers switch to manipulate influence or define situation as they wish. Also, they switch to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention." It is to say that code-switching is another way that students use to communicate without paying attention to the obstacles that could be presented during the writing process.

### Conclusions

The results of data analysis showed that journals are a useful tool to know some strategies the students use when they write and to show their writing development. Students prefer to follow a model when they write as it has many benefits which help them realize their own English level and what they are able to write. It increases their confidence when they write. Students are also more involved in the class with this model. It provides them a guide to follow the structure of the text (introduction, body, and conclusion) and it facilitates the vocabulary when they are writing. Following models is seen as a strategy to

implement writing since students begin this process.

The use of code switching happens when students want to communicate something and in order to avoid breaking their ideas. They write the word in their mother tongue while they look for the meaning of the word that they do not know. The use of code switching enables students' imagination to fly without the obstacle of stopping and looking for what they want to reflect in their journal.

Considering pedagogical implications, it can be stated that writing has been considered as a language skill that helps students to improve their linguistic and communicative competences and this skill should be promoted based not only on the technical technique but also from a free writing perspective. Then, writing practices allow learners express their needs, opinions, thoughts, feelings, and expectations about their real world that is around them in order to be critical and take an active role in the transformation of their reality.

Journals allow teachers to recognize students' writing development which involves strategies, tools, resources that they use to support their productions. Journals allow students to find the possibility to write without paying attention to accuracy. The use of journals gives students the chance to communicate and achieve fluency in writing and to share what they want to say to their classmates. It is an innovative source not only to develop writing skills.

Usually code switching is seen by the teachers as a writing problem as the mother tongue could be interference in the English learning. In this small-scale research project it was found that the use of Spanish words into the English writings allows students to write fluently without breaking the idea that they want to say while they look for a word that they need. Therefore, code switching is a strategy used by students to successfully communicate and avoid obstacles that could be presented during all the writing process.

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## DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL DIMENSIONS THROUGH THE DESIGN OF CURRICULAR UNITS BASED ON THE GANAG MODEL

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### **Abstract**

In this article we share the process and results of an a priori study that focused on materials design throughout the implementation of some curricular units based on the development of intercultural dimensions. The curricular units were designed and developed upon the GANAG model, with the purpose of working on intercultural competence dimensions following Byram's model (2003). In this pedagogical experience, conducted in two private schools in Tunja, our aim was to integrate intercultural dimensions in some curricular units in order for students to compare and understand their own culture

### **Resumen**

En este artículo compartimos los procesos y resultados de un estudio a priori que se centró en el diseño de materiales a través del diseño e implementación de algunas unidades curriculares basadas en el desarrollo de dimensiones interculturales. Las unidades curriculares fueron diseñadas y desarrolladas usando el modelo de GANAG, con el fin de trabajar en habilidades de la competencia intercultural siguiendo el modelo de Byram (2003). En esta experiencia pedagógica, llevada a cabo en dos colegios privados en Tunja, nuestro objetivo fue diseñar algunas unidades curriculares con el fin de que los

with those of others. Data was gathered through the use of semi structured interviews, field notes and students' artifacts. The results revealed that by means of the different curricular units guided by the stages proposed by the GANAG model, learners were able to move toward *saviors (Knowledge)* and *Savoir etre (attitudes)* proposed by Byram (2003) in the intercultural competence, where the values, beliefs and behaviors of a community or a social group were understood as individual and unique.

**Key words:** Intercultural competence, curricular units, GANAG, Byram's model,

estudiantes entendieran y compararan su propia cultura con la de los demás. Los datos fueron recogidos a través de la utilización de entrevistas semi-estructuradas, notas de campo y trabajos de los estudiantes. Los resultados revelaron que a través de las diferentes actividades guiadas por las etapas propuestas por el modelo de GANAG, los estudiantes fueron capaces de desarrollar algunas de las habilidades como *savoirs (conocimiento)* and *savoirs etre (actitudes)* propuestas por Byram (2003) en la competencia intercultural, donde los valores, creencias y comportamientos de una comunidad o un grupo social se entienden como individuales y únicos.

**Palabras clave:** competencia intercultural, unidades curriculares, GANAG, modelo de Byram.

## Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to design materials in order to help our students start a process in which the development of intercultural dimensions was relevant within our teaching practices. Intercultural dimensions are part of the intercultural competence which is the capacity to see relationships between different cultures throughout the analysis and understanding that one's own and other cultures' perspective (Byram, 2000). Globalization as a social phenomenon is everywhere and brings opportunities in which people need to establish and maintain relationships around the world. Therefore, English

teachers have to fulfill the requirements of a new society surrounded by political, cultural and economic changes, migration, growth in population, technological advances and so on. All these changes have encouraged socio cultural encounters between individuals of different cultural backgrounds in which there are no boundaries for intercultural encounters (Rico, 2011). For that reason, it is necessary to understand that we live in an interconnected world in which English teaching has to go beyond teaching grammar structures or vocabulary. Educators need to take advantage of materials design in order to generate meaningful tasks, relevant to students' lives

which help them to understand the world and develop intercultural dimensions (Rico, 2011; Nuñez, Pineda and Tellez, 2004).

Developing intercultural dimensions is really important in our society. For this reason, the National Government gives importance to being competent in an intercultural way. In article 56, the General Law of Education (Ley General de Educación) and the standards proposed by the Ministry of Education acknowledge intercultural competence as an important component which takes into account linguistic diversity, community participation and cultural aspects.

In this way, it is necessary to integrate intercultural aspects by designing materials that include, students' personalities, learning styles, language development expectations, likes, dislikes, needs and the contexts students are embedded in (Nuñez et al, 2004). Hence, the design and implementation of different curricular units allowed us to work on the students' needs and interests in regard to intercultural dimensions such as: *Savoir* (knowledge), *savoirs engager* (awareness), *savoir-faire* (skills), *savoir-être* (attitudes); and *savoir-communiquer* (proficiency). Those dimensions helped students to be aware of understanding peoples' differences in terms of beliefs, values and different life views throughout the use of curricular units based on urban tribes or subcultures.

Urban tribes or subcultures were chosen as the main topic of the curricular units because this topic was connected with the students' interests. Students pointed out that they wanted to work on interesting topics in

regard to their own culture and others because they did not see in their textbooks cultural themes where they could become familiar with and explore issues related to other. Additionally, urban tribes displayed some aspects of teenagers' culture such as beliefs, attitudes and behaviors in different parts of the world.

Additionally, the curricular units were based on intercultural competence, using a unit model called GANAG which is the acronym for designing a lesson. Hence, the GANAG model was based on five parts: Goal, Access to prior knowledge, New information, Application of new information, Apply stage and Goal review as a way of helping students to achieve academic and personal goals at the same time (Pollock, 2007).

This pedagogical experience was carried out at two private schools in Tunja whose objectives are focused on becoming leaders in English education. Specifically, their visions are based on "by 2014 to be pioneers in the formation of bilingual students prepared to face the globalized world challenges with success" (PEI of Country Bilingual School, 2012-2014, p. 11). "The Andino school will be an institution leader in Tunja, in seeking to offer high quality education in the research, social, art fields, in which English is its core subject" (PEI of Andino School, 2012-2014). The visions of those Educational institutions propose that it is necessary to use suitable ways of English instruction in which teachers have a relevant role which will help students to face the challenges of a globalized world using strong tools given by the school. In this case, intercultural competence can be a way to achieve the visions of those schools

because they seek to have bilingual students prepared to deal with new experiences in this globalized world. For that reason, the main concern of this study was about the way similar intercultural dimensions can be developed through the design and implementation of curricular units with seventh graders from two different settings. Finally, the instruments used in order to gather data were semi structured interviews, field notes and students' artifacts which allowed determining whether the materials helped students to develop intercultural dimensions.

### **Theoretical framework**

Keeping in mind that this pedagogical experience was related to the development of intercultural dimensions and materials design we are going to consider three main constructs for this theoretical framework: Intercultural competence, intercultural dimensions, material development and the GANAG model.

#### ***Intercultural Competence***

Because of globalization, expansion of languages, and the movement of people from country to country, foreign language learning has changed from different perspectives. For example, in terms of language viewing; it is important that students are involved in grammar activities, but the communicative part is also essential. The major innovative feature of the communicative approach was related to the recognition that students do not just need knowledge and skills in the grammar of a language, but also the ability to use language in socially and culturally appropriate ways (Byram, 2003).

Intercultural competence is a term that has taken importance into the Foreign Language teaching and learning because it is now required that students be not just competent in grammar, vocabulary and structures, but are also able to understand others as human beings with individual identities, behaviors and values across cultures ( Bennett, 2011; Kramsch, Le´vy & Zarate 2008 cited by kramsch, 2010; ). According to Byram (2003) "intercultural competence is the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality". Therefore, intercultural competence goes beyond a system and conveying meaning. Intercultural competence deals with the possibility to understand that there are other kind of people with multiple visions, beliefs, attitudes, values and perceptions towards the world.

Byram (2003) affirms that developing an intercultural dimension in language teaching makes "students to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms." In this way, students would be able to understand and accept people from other cultures on equal terms. That is, that students need to have space for understanding different cultures, but these cultures are not just concerned with other countries, but also with their own local culture. In regard to our own culture, it is important to motivate students based on their own values in order to develop intercultural dimensions in a suitable way (Bennett, 2011).

#### ***Intercultural dimensions***

Intercultural competence also embraces five savors or dimensions. Those dimensions



are: *savoirs* (knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal); *savoir apprendre/faire* (skills to discover and/or interact); *savoir comprendre* (skills to interpret and relate); *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness, political education); *savoir être* (attitudes: relativising self, valuing others) (Byram, 2003; Byram and Zarate 1997). In this way, these savors or dimensions of intercultural competence were worked on in our study as main components of each curricular unit.

Based on the above information, it is necessary to explain each dimension in order to understand what each one entails. *Savoir être* is connected to the openness, curiosity and interest to know about other cultures and belief about one's own. Rico (2003) points up that *Savoir être means to know* how to be: how to relativize oneself and value the attitudes and beliefs of the other. The participants could approach to this skill in the sense that they showed a high interest toward these urban tribes, especially because they were familiar with the theme and they noticed how they are as Colombians and how others are too. *Savoir comprendre* attempts to the skill of interpreting comparing and relating a product such as texts, videos from other cultures. *Knowledge* is the other ability included in the intercultural competence. *Knowledge* is concerned with the understanding of social groups and their products and practices in societal and individual interactions. Therefore, knowledge is also connected with the information of self and other; of how interaction occurs; of the relationship of the individual to society (Ibid, 2011) That is, in terms of this research, students became

familiar with the philosophy, behaviors, practices, styles of self and other in social and individual interactions. Finally, *savoir s'engager* involves critical culture awareness and *savoir apprendre* is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture in real practices (Byram, 2003).

### **Materials development**

In this section of material development we are going to address the following aspects: teachers as materials designer, definition of material design, the components in the process of creating didactic learning materials and the GANAG model as lesson planning for the curricular units.

### **Teachers as material designer**

Developing materials for the EFL/ESL classroom is not just for textbook developers. Teachers also have the possibility to design their own material for their English classes. According to Nuñez, et al (2004) teachers "have the possibility of prioritizing the learners and placing them at the center of the language program while acquainting them with the current world." The last quotation indicates that students are the center of the class and materials have to be designed thinking about their interests and current contexts. For that reason, we as innovative professionals (Nuñez, at al. 2004) designed some curricular units based on the GANAG model which integrated intercultural aspects which called students' attention. Moreover, Rico (2011) states that teachers should create pedagogical devices that enable learners to understand more effectively differences among languages and cultures.

According to Nuñez, Tellez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009) “ Most EFL/ESL teachers are creative professionals who have the potential to explore their creativity and embark upon the fascinating task of developing their own didactic materials based not only on their teaching experience, but also on their expertise in the cognitive and learning processes needed by EFL/ESL learners.” In this sense, teachers can create their own materials thinking about their current teaching contexts and the students’ learning processes.

### ***Definition of material design***

It is important to acknowledge that materials design are intimately connected with the field of material development. Tomlinson(1998) states that “materials development is anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake.” The author presents how materials development can improve teaching practices by using different materials which enhance students to learn in a suitable way. In this specific case, we improved our teaching practices by designing new materials connected with students’ needs and their context.

Although, Tomlinson (1998) does not state that curricular units are part of materials development it is possible to assert that “curricular units may be understood as a source of input that is produced by teachers to better students’ learning” (Ramos, Aguirre and Hernández, 2012). For that reason, we as research-teachers chose curricular units as a way of starting the process of working on materials development in order to improve our teaching practices.

### ***The components in the process of creating didactic learning materials***

In order to construct the curricular units based on the GANAG model we considered the following stages : Carrying out a needs assessment, setting goals and objectives, conceptualizing content / designing a syllabus, selecting and developing materials and activities, organizing content and activities and evaluating materials” (Nuñez and Tellez, 2006).

### ***GANAG model as lesson planning for the curricular units***

In this section we are going to present the definition and characteristics of the model that was used during the designing and implementation of the curricular units.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is necessary to vary the use of different lesson planning in order to increase students’ achievement. In this sense, GANAG is a way of helping students to achieve academic and personal goals in a well-developed lesson plan which incorporates students’ needs and interests. Specifically, GANAG is a model of classroom instruction which was created by Jane E. Pollock updated by Madeline Hunter’s model for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. GANAG is considered as a lesson planning model which involves high yield instructional strategies such as: Identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, generating and testing hypothesis and questions cues and advance organizers.

The five letters represent a model of lesson preparation that has five different components and stages that are divided in *Goal* that is supported by two components that refer to the set of objectives, provide feedback and recognize effort made by students. This introductory part was relevant because in this stage the *Goal* was learning about urban tribes which were intimately connected with intercultural aspects. *Access to prior knowledge* was the next stage where learners gave opinions about what they knew in relation to these social groups. In this stage the cooperative work was relevant because they interacted, asking and answering questions, making connections between prior and new knowledge. *New Information* was the stage where learners accessed to new information through tools such as videos, readings, and discussions about the urban tribes. They expressed themselves, in agreement and disagreement with certain ideas and facts. They took notes and everyone as different and individual human beings approached these concepts and practices. In the *Apply and Goal review stages*, learners developed and lived new experiences through different activities related to urban tribes, asked questions, interpreted written information related to these social groups and reviewed the goals established at the beginning of the lesson. For instance, the first goal was using *wh*-questions in order to ask information about urban tribes or subcultures. The second goal was reinforcing reading comprehension strategies in order to understand new information about urban tribes. Finally, the last goal was creating a Colombian subculture. In addition, something relevant about this model was that the assessment is a continuous process

that does not just go at the end but must be frequent after each stage: Goal, Access to prior information, New information, Apply knowledge and generalizations.

### **Creating curricular units based on Intercultural competence and GANAG model**

The design and implementation of curricular units was based on intercultural topics such as Urban Tribes or Subcultures, following the GANAG model, in which a lesson planning was based on five parts: Goal, Access prior knowledge, New information, Application of new information, Apply stage and Goal review.

The curricular units showed how the GANAG model functioned as a lesson preparation with each topic from urban tribes such as: readings, workshops and videos about Otaku, Emos, Punks, and goths encouraged students to be aware of understanding how other people think and behave around the world (See annex A).

We selected GANAG because it offers an organized and meaningful way to carry out a lesson with its own goals. We designed a series of 4 curricular units with specific goals. The first goal was to use *Wh*-questions and *yes/no* questions to talk about urban tribes. The Second goal was to reinforce students' knowledge about urban tribes, developing reading strategies. The third goal was to watch a video from National Geographic, in order for students to identify characteristics of some urban tribes around the world. The last goal was related to the creation of a Colombian subculture using the information and language acquired in the previous units.

Additionally, one of the most important aspects of this model was that the assessment is a continuous process that does not just go at the end but must be frequent after each stage.

At the beginning of the application of the first curricular unit about Wh- questions,

students were evaluated when they shared their prior knowledge about urban tribes through brainstorming. Besides, they were evaluated in terms of grammar use when they showed understanding about the use of Wh-question talking about a real and controversial topic “Urban Tribes”.

**URBAN TRIBES OR SUBCULTURES**

VOLUMEN I, N° 1

**URBAN TRIBES**

Goal

- Use Wh-questions and yes no questions to talk about urban tribes

Access to prior knowledge

- Students recall information on urban tribes and do a brain storming.

New information

- Students share experiences based on the activity.

Apply knowledge

- Filling blanks and sharing opinions about the lesson.

Generalizations

- By groups students share their answers

1. Complete the following questions using WH-questions (What, Who, Where, Which, Who, How and How many) and yes - no questions . Please, answer these questions based on the picture and the words from the brainstorming.

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ do you know about urban tribes or subcultures?

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ Subcultures do you know?

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ kind of urban tribes or subcultures are part of Colombian teenagers' lives?

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ there subcultures in your city? Give examples

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ there urban tribes or subcultures in your school? Give examples

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ urban tribes or subcultures from other countries? Give exam-

Illustration 1, first curricular unit

In the second curricular unit, students were evaluated during each stage of the reading, Pre reading, while reading and after reading.

Finally, students were able to show understanding about subcultures' strengths and weaknesses.

**URBAN TRIBES OR SUBCULTURES**

**Goal**

- Students reinforce their knowledge about urban tribes, awakening reading strategies.

**Access to prior knowledge**

- Students compare their prior knowledge about urban tribes (punks, emos, gothic, and others) while they read the different texts.

**New information**

- Students read about punks, punks, otaku, ravers and emos.

**Apply knowledge**

- students join in group and recall the information acquire to each urban tribe.

**Generalization**

- Students complete a chart with some parameters in order to give specific information.

## PUNKS

David and Monica from I.R.A. say it is because of the suffering Colombians have experienced over the years and add that punk music's popularity comes from "the hearts of the youth who are living with unemployment, violence, and intolerance" on a daily basis

Based on my travels, I would have to agree. Misery is great fodder for a punk scene, but it doesn't explain the full story. Places like Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, and Ecuador have experienced their own share of misery, yet have comparatively smaller scenes. Indeed the misery index is high in many Latin American cities where the punk scene is a fraction of the size and depth of Colombia's (in Argentina, punk was outlawed during the military dictatorship, Peru was ripped apart by terrorism and war in the 1980s, and don't get me started on Cuba). Andres of Los Suxos doesn't shy away from heavy subjects like global politics in his lyrics. He says that Colombia's casual, good time culture has a lot to do with it, matching up favorably with punks' DIY and democratic method of delivering a diverse message Colombia is known for many things — a brutal war that once made inter-country travel almost impossible, thuggish drug cartels, government corruption, and crippling poverty in a capitalistic economic system that still too often leaves the weak to fend for themselves.

It's also known for its incredibly diverse ecology, cultures and geography, delicious food, cheap beer, and emerging middle class and some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet. And one more thing, it can now be known as a place with some of the best punk music you've ever heard. I can hear the Colombian tourism bureau's tagline now, "Colombia ... the only risk is that you'll get a me-hawk."

Adapted from: <http://music.remezcla.com/2012/>



## GOTHICS

Goth, to an extent, has always been used to describe things that don't fit to well within society. For example: The name "Gothic" refers to a Germanic tribe the "Goths" that lived in their mythical homeland - the Gotland island.

They were renowned warriors, famous for their courage and "barbaric" cruelty. During the 3rd and 4th centuries harried the roman armies, waged war against other tribes and Roman Empire. They famously sacked the city of Rome, creating their kingdoms on the ruins of other civilizations.

Adapted from: <http://gothic-portal.azwardspace.com/>

Illustration 2, second curricular unit

The third curricular unit was evaluated while students watched the video through questions and, at the end through the chart when

students were able to analyze and to describe the strengths and weaknesses of each urban tribe presented on the Natgeo video.

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**URBAN TRIBES ACTIVITY**

**WHILE YOU WATCH**

- How do Emos perform?
- What do gothics like?
- What is death for gothics?
- What do you get for the EMO word?
- Do you share the emos' ideas about life? Justify
- How teenagers from your country express identity?



- What is music for people who are part of urban tribes?
- What mean to be a teenager in your country and the countries presented on the video?
- Is it normal to be part of a urban tribe or subculture? Justify

**AFTER YOU WATCH**

EMOS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
GOTYK		
OTAKU		
PUNKS		

**Goal**

Through a video from Nat Geo , students identify characteristics of some urban tribes around the world.

**Acces to information**

Students recall previous information about different sub-cultures

**New information**

Students watch a video called "tabú latinoamerica"

**Apply knowledge**

Students develop an interpretative and argumentative activity based on the information presented on the video.

**Generalization**

Students give their answers according to the all interpretation from the video and share them with others.

Illustration 3, Third curricula unit

The last curricular unit was evaluated during the whole process of the creation of the Colombian urban tribe. Moreover, students were evaluated in terms of creativity, students understanding about their own culture, the other cultures features and the use of new vocabulary and structures. The descriptions

presented above reveals how the students' assessment was a strong process developed from the beginning of each unit until the last part of them. Furthermore, Pre reading, While reading and After reading activities allowed us to evaluate students following their learning process.

**Goal**  
Students create their own subculture and describe it using the information and language acquire before.

**Acces to prior knowledge**  
Students use the information learnt before to create their own subculture.


**New knowledge**  
Students work in groups in order to create their own subculture.

**Apply Knowledge**  
Students present and show their subculture based on the information learnt before

**Generalization**  
Students express opinos and thoughts about the activities carry out throughout the previous lessons of the unit.

PAGE 6

## MAKING A COLOMBIAN URBAN TRIBE OR SUBCULTURE



Taking into account the urban tribes or subcultures presented before, construct your own subculture following the next parameters.

History of the subculture

---

Music

---

Kind of clothing

---

Symbol


---

Attitudes

---

Beliefs

---



*Illustration 4, fourth curricular unit*

This GANAG model offered the possibility for students to put into practice their learning strategies to solve problems and in the same way to use the language in a practical way, mastering learners' high instructional strategies within the classroom in regards to intercultural topics.

### **Context of the experience**

This study was carried out in two private institutions which are located in Tunja. Each school has around three hundred students, and in one of them, subjects such as sciences, social studies and mathematics

are taught in English. On the other hand, the other institution is not a bilingual school but its core subjects are Mathematics and English. One of these institutions is well known because of the recognition obtained for offering bilingual education. The visions and missions mainly refer to offering an integral education where learners act upon values such as respect and tolerance and using the English language in a proper way. Actually, the main objectives of each institution is focused on becoming leaders in English education. Their visions are based on “by 2014 to be pioneers in the formation of bilingual students prepared to face the globalized world challenges with success” (PEI of Country Bilingual School, 2012-2014, p. 11). “The Andino school will be an institution leader in Tunja, in seeking to offer high quality education in the research, social, art fields, in which English is its core subject” (PEI of Andino School, 2012-2014).

The visions of those Educational institutions propose that it is necessary to use suitable ways of English instruction in which teachers have a relevant role which will help students to face the challenges of a globalized world using strong tools given by the school. In this case, intercultural competence can be a way to achieve the visions of those schools because they seek to have bilingual students prepared to deal with new experiences in this globalized world.

Moreover, in both institutions it is compulsory to use textbooks that do not offer the development of a communicative competence or intercultural competence, because the activities displayed are concerned with filling in gaps, completing sentences and writing using words in an

isolated way, and do not allow students to interact with others and construct meanings based on these experiences.

### ***The students***

This study was developed with seventh graders in both institutions. There were 45 participants at both schools. The students who participated in this study were around eleven to fourteen years old. Moreover, they were very enthusiastic, curious, and willing to explore and participate in new experiences. In the same way, they had been asking and complaining about their textbooks because they never found interesting topics related to their own culture. Moreover, they were students who have an English level that allowed the development of activities where they had to use the language to express their points of view, negotiate with their classmates, and compare their own social group with other subcultures. In the same way, bearing in mind the purpose of this research, they had started a process before, based on the need to deal and treat with local themes, so it helped our intervention as teachers.

### ***Findings***

We collected information from different sources. We used field notes, semi structure interviews and students' artifacts. The use of field notes was important because this instrument allowed us to register relevant information after the implementation of each curricular unit. Students artifacts evidenced that to what extent learners approached each of the Byram model dimensions (2003). Throughout this instrument, students revealed the way they understood and



interpreted data from urban tribes around the world. Finally, we used a semi-structured interview which allowed us to analyze students' perceptions and opinions about the curricular units. Based on the previous instruments, we got two main categories following the A priori approach. In this sense, *savoirs (Knowledge)* and *savoir etre (attitudes)* were the two intercultural dimensions developed by seventh graders throughout the design and implementation of curricular units based on the GANAG model.

### ***Savoirs (Knowledge)***

Byram (2003) claims that *Savoirs* (knowledge) is the dimension of intercultural competence which is concerned with the understanding of social groups and their products and practices in societal and individual interaction. In this case, students understood that urban tribes were social groups with some specific practices different to their own.

During the implementation of the second and third curricular units it was possible to observe that students were able to understand that people who belong to urban tribes think and behave totally different to them. The previous information can be supported with the following statements.

“Students got enough information from the readings applied in the second curricular unit, for example: They expressed that “I didn't know that punks' music was something related to Politics. “ or “Goths respect death, it is something interesting” (Field notes)

In this way, through the implementation of the second curricular unit students got information about how Punks conceive the music and what music means to them. And how goths perceive death. Something that was unknown to the students before the implementation of the curricular units. Furthermore, students learnt information of some specific features of each group. Hence, during the process of getting new information students were able to make comparisons between their own culture and others.

“Group B: emmos are a group of people that have different characteristics, for example they are depressed all the time, wearing all black, and cutting themselves a lot, but we do not do that, we try to feel happy all the time”

“Group C: Gothics behave different to us, they have something weird like their makeup and we don't like to wear meakup” (Students' artifacts)

Keeping in mind the previous quotations. Students were able to recognize that they were different to Punks, Emmos and Gothics because they had other ways of interaction in the society. In this manner, they understood the products and practices of those social groups in societal and individual interaction.

### ***Savoir être (attitudes)***

This category is related to the attitudes that students acquired in regard to their own culture and others. Byram (2003) states that *Savoir être* is an intercultural ability connected to the openness, curiosity and

interest to know about other cultures and belief of one's own. In this case, students were able to develop *Savoir être* (attitudes) when we implemented the third and fourth curricular units. Let's analyze and see the basis of previous appreciations.

"students showed interest in regard to urban tribes when we played the Video called "Tabú tribus urbanas" so that they noticed in depth why those urban tribes exist in different parts of the world. Actually, the video was so attractive because it had some scenes in which it was possible to show Otakus, Punks, Gothics and Emmon practices. When the video talked about gothics, students asked many question about gothics because this subculture is related to death and students were so curious about it and they said that they wanted to know more things about gothics and their strange lifestyle." (Field notes)

Taking into account the previous information gathered from field notes, we can claim that student developed *Savoir être* (attitudes) because they showed curiosity and interest to know about other cultures like Gothics subculture (Byram, 2003). Actually, Students got curious because the curricular units worked on different and interesting topics like death. Students like to talk about dark topics which show them something different about the world.

*Savoirs être*(attitudes) is also related to the beliefs about one's own (Byram, 2003). For that reason, during the implementation of the last curricular unit students were aware of displaying their beliefs about their own culture throughout the creation of a

Colombian Subculture. In this way, we present some field notes that support this information.

"We observed that the students were able to share what Colombian culture is, throughout their beliefs about it. Specifically, they did not judge it, as usual, they were able to show that their own culture is different through beautiful music (Cumbia) and they acknowledged happiness in each performance" (Field notes).

It is evident that students' beliefs about one's own it is associated with the idea that Colombia is a happy country. Therefore, students got attitudes in regard to their culture and others identifying their own values, beliefs and behaviors.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of this research project, it was possible to realize that the intercultural dimensions that students developed through the implementations of some curricular units were Saviors (Knowledge) and *Savoir Etre* (dimensions). Those intercultural dimensions made students understand their own culture and other in terms of beliefs and social practices. Consequently, learners mastered their ability to get new information of different social groups and to understand that there are other people around them with different visions, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions towards the world and who are part of the same context in which they are living.

Finally, during the implementation of the curricular units, students also were able to

show positive beliefs of their own culture. Something that is connected with Saviour  
etre as intercultural dimension.

### **Pedagogical implications**

The design of this Curricular units focused on intercultural topics provides teachers the possibility to work on material development. Material development is an important tool that allows teachers to include students' voices during the process of material design. Specifically, teachers integrate students' likes, contexts and interests when they create or adapt materials in the English classes. It is important to continue working on material development field so that teachers can improve their daily practices, making and improving their performance. Moreover, the design of some curricular units helped us to be more reflective teachers and receptive agents in our classes. We heard our students and integrated their likes and interests during the design of our curricular units fostering students to learn a foreign language and develop intercultural dimensions.

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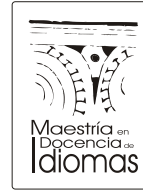
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## EXPLORING FIRST GRADERS LANGUAGE AWARENESS

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### **Abstract**

This article reports a study, carried out at a private school in Tunja, with ten first grade students. The aim was to explore and analyze the characteristics of first graders language awareness. In order to achieve this objective, a case study was developed. Thus, a description was made of the way students experience the process of learning English and identifying the features of their language awareness process. Observations and interviews were used for data collection. The main findings suggest first graders features of language awareness are: mother tongue as well as foreign language, peer correction and motivation to contribute to language awareness.

### **Resumen**

En este artículo se reporta un estudio que se llevó a cabo en un colegio privado en Tunja, con diez estudiantes de primer grado. El objetivo fue explorar y analizar las características de la conciencia del lenguaje de los estudiantes de grado primero en el Colegio Los Angeles. Para alcanzar este objetivo, un estudio de caso fue desarrollado ya que se realizó una descripción de la experiencia vivida por los estudiantes cuando aprenden inglés. La recolección de datos se hizo mediante observaciones y entrevistas. Los principales resultados indican que la lengua materna, la lengua extranjera y la corrección de errores entre compañeros contribuyen hacen aparte

**Key words:** young learners, language awareness, English language learning process,

importante del proceso de conciencia del lenguaje.

**Palabras clave:** niños, conciencia del lenguaje, proceso de aprendizaje del inglés

## Introduction

This document presents a report on a small scale case study. This study aims at analyzing first graders' language awareness, in order to understand the way students experience the learning process and evidence awareness of it, since early ages. Thus, it is essential to explore different aspects which may evidence language awareness such as: students' engagement during the lessons, the analysis they are able to do when learning, as they compare and describe how language is used or how it works and some other additional aspects. This analysis on language awareness provides teachers with some reasons to understand the process young children go through in order to transform teaching practices, bearing in mind students' particular contexts, needs and interests.

Thus, this mini scale project aims at exploring first graders' language awareness features. Therefore the following research question was stated as follows:

**What language awareness features are revealed when first graders learn English as a foreign language?**

## Theoretical Background

Two areas are relevant in order to carry out

this case study. First of all, the concept of language awareness, as the core concept of this study, needs to be described. Secondly, it was pertinent to understand the process; young learners go through when learning a language and identify some key aspects. Finally, some research studies in the field of language awareness and language learning are addressed.

## Language awareness

Language awareness is an important component in the process of teaching and learning a language. Although, it has not often been a matter of discussion in our contexts, it really deserves to be studied, in order to have a better understanding and a more particular perspective about how teachers and students experience language in our current contexts. Language awareness is an essential component in the teaching and learning process of a foreign language, as it embraces and can be related to aspects that go beyond knowing the language system itself. Language awareness is relevant for teachers, students, the context in which teaching and learning practices take place.

From the perspective of students' role, language awareness can be understood as the way students experience learning the language by actively participating during the

lessons and showing interest, the attitudes they reflect during the process demonstrating their feelings when experiencing this process and expressing their insights about language learning. One of the most important factors is motivation as, students are likely to be interested in learning when they are affectively engaged and demonstrate interest and desire of learning (Tomlinson, 2003).

Language teachers also influence how aware students can be about language. They are mediators who provide the students with opportunities to explore language. The perspective of language teachers reflect influences the way students understand and perceive language. For that reason, the teachers' task is to involve students in asking questions about language and allow them to explore dimensions of language (Bolitho et al, 2003), others than considering it as a mere system of signs and symbols. Thus, it depends on teachers, whether students see language as a complete system of signs, symbols and rules or, as a way to explore the world, to have contact with other people and other ideas, to communicate, interact and negotiate meaning. Then moving to a critical language awareness perspective that consists of conceiving language as a tool to understand the world and power relations (Clark & Ivanic, 1999 as cited in Bolitho et al, 2003)

The context, in which language is used, plays an important role when factors such as school policies, the social and economic situation and the teaching practices may influence the perspective of language, students may have. Thus, having a common perspective about language as a mean of

conveying meaning will lead to achieving this common goal. Teachers create the environment they want their students to be immersed in, using methodologies and materials which are particular to meet students' needs and promote an exploration of language.

### **Language Learning**

Language learning is closely related to language awareness. Promoting and developing language awareness may contribute to carrying out a better learning process, in this way; students have a better understanding and a clear view of language. Thus, having in mind the definition and assumptions of language awareness previously presented language learning is a process in which students and teachers have a particular perspective of language. Language surrounds us everywhere and is the main tool which allows communication and interaction among people. Clark (2000) proposes a whole overview with some important aspects surrounding language learning. He states children's language is changing constantly. Since, children are learning to communicate, they feel engaged in the process, as they interact and live different experiences, they understand how language works and get involved in a communicative competence. Students acquire the ability to understand grammar rules as they use the language. As children develop the ability to use language, it is easier for them to understand different situations and they are able to control their own actions and thoughts. As children are socially competent, their language competence is also influenced. It is to say that interaction and being competent, socially determine and

give some tools in order to develop their language competence. Stimulating and rich environments support language development and encouraging them to express their opinions according to real situations helps them to build language experience.

There are various research reports that relate language awareness to language learning,

Muñoz (2012) asserts that there is little research on how young learners perceive the foreign language and the learning experience. She carried out a comparative study across seven European countries and it lasted from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. It was observed an evolution of learners' beliefs and their self-perceptions as language learners. The information gathered, presented young learner's self-perception, feelings about foreign language learning, language learning and language awareness

Restrepo (2006) shared a proposal in which the teacher-researcher took into account the students' interests and through the implementation of the Language Awareness approach to grammar instruction, the learners of 9<sup>th</sup> grade had a better understanding of how grammatical structures work and how to integrate them in written ways. Besides, learners were conscious of their own learning, presenting positive attitudes in the language use not only inside but also outside the classroom.

Another research project based on Multilingual Virtual Talking books analyzed how a storybook software fostered the development of language awareness in primary school children, in this study

Language Awareness was defined as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use" (ALA 1992). Twenty-seven primary school children applied a performance test in which the cognitive level of Language Awareness was assessed and through a questionnaire their affective level of Language Awareness was evaluated, the results led to confirm that Multilingual Virtual Talking Books software enhanced Language awareness on both the cognitive and the affective level.

Thus, from the previous review, it can be seen that language awareness. These studies in which the participants are children have shown that Language Awareness allows the development of students' independence in their language learning process.

## **Methodology**

Case study has been the research method used in this mini-scale project. For Cohen & Manion (1994) and Yin (2003), case study can be used to observe the characteristics of an individual unit within a real life context, in this case a group of ten first graders. This project aimed at analyzing and describing first graders' language awareness features, as they take place in everyday class activities. The students demonstrated during their classes a previous knowledge about language, how it works and how it is used.

## **Setting and Participants**

This Project took place at a private school in Tunja. It holds preschool, elementary and



high school. It has about seven hundred students in one shift. One of the school's emphasis is English because of the number of hours established in the curriculum.

The students selected at random for this study were ten students, chosen out of an entire group of thirty one first graders; they range in age from six to seven years old. There are twenty boys and eleven girls in the group. They have been learning English as a foreign language since preschool. They take seven English hours per week, four hours of science in English and one hour of speaking. Each session is forty five minutes long. They were given nicknames when quoting them. We asked for permission to collect information by using a consent form. (See Annex 1)

### **Data collection**

The main instruments that were used to collect information were video recordings and interviews in order to describe, analyze and evidence the students' reactions through their understanding about their language learning process.

### **Video recordings**

Video recordings were used to record five sessions of the English class based on different activities in the books, workshops, exams and through the information gathered to analyze the different reactions and interpretations students lived when learning a foreign language and how these revealed characteristics of their language awareness from their experiences. The instrument was used one and two hours each week during all the English classes.

### **Interviews**

Interviews were used at the end of our research study; it allowed gathering more specific information on students' spontaneous responses, taken from video recordings. Ten students were selected for the interviews as they showed participation during the five sessions and revealed features of the language awareness. The questions were asked to know students opinions and experiences towards the process of their language learning. (See Annex 2).

### **Data analysis**

This part of our study describes the process we followed to analyze the gathered data in order to answer the research question: **What language awareness features are revealed when first graders learn English as a foreign language?** Additionally, research findings are presented in three categories that emerged from the current research project. In order to analyze data, first common patterns were found in the class observations and the answers given by the students in the interviews. The interviews were about some situations students lived during the classes and which were related to how aware they were when learning the language. Students' answers and attitudes reflected important aspects related to their process of language awareness. We used the next codes in the data analysis: VR=Video Recordings, SI= Student Interview, T: teacher. We proposed the following codes: S1, S2, S3, S4 and STS to refer to the students who participated in this research. Three categories emerged from the data analysis. These are L1 and L2, peer correction and motivation.

## L1 and L2

During the observation of the English classes, it was observed that learners' mother language took an important place in their foreign language learning process. Students used their mother language as a tool to demonstrate understanding of the foreign language. It is important to highlight that this is an evidence of how students firstly being aware of their mother language influences being aware of the foreign language and vice versa. This compensates their need of learning, and leads them to acquire new knowledge. Adapting words from Spanish to English allows them to participate even when the words are not appropriate or correct in English

*(Excerpt No. 1 VR. 16/05/2013)*

*T: Do you remember what the story is about?*

*STS: house*

*T: House and what else?*

*STS: a boy and a girl*

*T: What are they doing?*

*STS: "jugando a las escondidas"*

*T: they are playing hide and seek*

*S1:B1: "escondid"*

*T: ok! And do you remember what happen here?*

*STS: esta contando*

*T: they are counting. How do you count?*

*STS: one! Two!...ten!*

*T: and then you go and look the one you are looking for*

*S2: "esta viendo por todos los lados haber si lo encuentra"*

*T: ok! He is looking for a girl. Please Alejandro*

*S3: "están en la habitación"*

This category reflects one of the characteristics of language awareness. Students knowing how language works is an important aspect in order to be aware about language. Data shows that students are able to build up their own knowledge about language. During the classes, it was observed that students had the ability to ask questions about language and how it worked, in order to construct meaning from the given answers (Tomlinson, 2003). During another session of the English class, the teacher was working on the identification of personal pronouns. Students were learning about how to differentiate "he and she". In order to confirm knowledge, a student was asked why he should write "she" to complete a sentence. After some practice, the student was able to express some reasons to support why his answer was correct.

This is evident through the answers provided by the students in the video recordings.

*(Excerpt No. 1. VR 16/05/2013)*

*T: Por qué "she" Santiago?*

*S1: Porque es niña*

*S1: escribimos She?*

*T: yes, Santiago*

*S2: she*

*T: really if I say my brother. I say he or I say she*

*STS: she... he*

*T: what is brother? Listen I can say Cesar is my brother. Do I say he or do I say she.*

*STS: he*

*T: uhmm is the same as I say Santiago is my brother, do I say he or she*

*S4: she really?*

*T: if I say Paula Sofia is my sister,*

*STS: she*

*T: she is in the classroom. If I say Zack is*

*my brother, do I say he or she?*

*STS: he*

*T: he is in the bedroom, very good!*

### Peer correction

During the observations and the interview, it was observed how students play an important role in their peers' foreign language learning process. Students were able to identify and correct their classmates' mistakes. Thus, they evidence consciousness on how language works when they are able to differentiate words. For instance, in a class in which the topic was the parts of the house, the teacher elicited some words. One of the students said "chicken" instead of "kitchen", after listening to the words; she was able to select the word she wanted to communicate in her message. Peer correction allows students to pay more attention to how language works and notice the gap between his performance and that of others. This will lead to readiness and attention where the same situation takes place Tomlinson (2003). In this case, the student will remember how to use the words kitchen and chicken.

(Excerpt No. 2. VR 22/05/2013)

*T: ah! Ok! Which are the parts of the house? Tell me one*

*STS: garage!! Yard!*

*T: what do you do in the yard? Do you eat in the yard?*

*S3: nooo! "chicken"*

*T: chicken or kitchen?*

*STS: kitchen*

In the interview a student talks about how she explains to her classmates when they ask her for clarification on the activities from

the class. Giving explanations to their classmates and clarifying them what they have to do in the activities of the class, shows how learning becomes a social process in which the peers help build knowledge and contribute to the learning process. This helps learners to notice for themselves how language works and interaction allows achieving their own mental representation of language Tomlinson, 2003)

(Excerpt No. 3. SI 22/06/2013)

*T: ¿tus amiguitos hablan en inglés en la clase?*

*S4: mmm algunos no*

*T: y cuando ellos no saben qué hacer en la clase de inglés tu les ayudas?*

*S4: si*

*T: y como les explicas*

*S4: les explico que hay que hacer como que hay que poner "elephant" o toca poner así como "gato" en inglés*

### Motivation

This aspect is one which is highlighted by Tomlinson (2003), by stating that students learn well when they are affectively engaged. This factor is part of language awareness as it evidences how important is language for learners and how this importance can influence their involvement in the process. Their preferences and interests from an early age, makes them think about big dreams they want to accomplish and learning the language will take them closer to achieving it.

During the interview a student was asked if he would like to learn some other languages. The student expresses his desire of learning

another language because of his interests of traveling to another country. Since an early age, students understand that learning a different language goes beyond an academic requirement but, it provides different opportunities such as traveling and discovering new perspectives.

(Excerpt N. 4 from SI 22/06/2013)

S5: *yo quiero aprender frances*

T: *Por qué quieres aprender francés*

S5: *porque mi papá sabe francés y me está enseñando*

T: *tu papá ya estuvo en Francia*

S5: *si cuando era chiquito*

T: *Te gusta las clases de inglés?*

S5: *si.*

T: *Por qué?*

S5: *son divertidas*

In the previous example, a first grade student says he wants to learn French because he wants to travel to France. He is aware that learning this language will open up the opportunity to travel to a different country and perceives language as the means to achieve his goal. In this way, students move from considering English and other languages as the mere subjects at school, towards considering them as means to explore the world around them. Consequently, they have more reasons to be interested in learning the language. Despite their age, they are conscious of the benefits of learning a foreign language.

## Conclusions

The features of language awareness which are evident when first graders learn English are represented by the roles of mother language and foreign language, peer correction and motivation.

The mother language plays an important role when referring to language awareness in the foreign language learning process. Strategies used in the mother language are transferred to foreign language and this may contribute to a more conscious and meaningful learning process.

Students since early ages are able to show evidence of being aware of their language learning process as they ask questions about how language works. They are conscious of the importance of learning a language and they express the willingness of learning it, in order to have other opportunities such as traveling and knowing different things.

Research on language awareness allows analyzing students' role in the process of learning the language. Moreover, it offers the possibility to design activities which empowers learners to take a reflective position towards their process of learning the language.

Language awareness implies more than understanding language as a group of signs and symbols. It implies allowing students to explore language as a means to share experiences and know about the world around them.

## Pedagogical Implications

Research on students' language awareness will benefit teaching and learning practices as it allows taking a closer view to the process students go through, in order to understand it better and giving the possibility to teachers for planning specific activities related to the particular characteristics of the students.

Language awareness is a field which needs to be researched more deeply concerning to how it is experienced by different participants from different ages and different contexts, in order to modify teaching practices and understand how students really go through the process of learning the foreign language.

Additionally, understanding the process of language awareness may contribute to facilitate students' involvement in order for them to become active participants of their own learning process and be conscious of the importance of this role.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Consent Form

Estimados padres de familia,

Las docentes de Inglés Liliana Fagua y Angélica Parra estudiantes de la maestría en docencia de Idiomas de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia desarrollaremos un proyecto investigativo basado en examinar la consciencia del aprendizaje de la lengua que tienen los estudiantes de grado primero.

Dicho proyecto es conocido por las directivas de la institución, quienes han permitido realizarlo como parte de nuestro proceso de formación como futuros investigadores en el campo de la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera y en segundo lugar por la M.A. Yolanda Samaca, orientadora del proyecto.

La información para esta investigación se recolectará a través de observaciones de clase, trabajos de los estudiantes y grabaciones de audio. Esta investigación no tendrá incidencia en notas de la materia y se llevará a cabo únicamente en la jornada escolar, adaptada a las temáticas del plan de área de la institución sin afectar a los estudiantes en su programa académico. Se usarán nombres ficticios para mantener la identidad de los participantes en el anonimato.

Agradecemos de antemano su valiosa colaboración en esta investigación.

Atentamente,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lic. Liliana Fagua  
Docente de Inglés.  
Colegio los Ángeles  
Estudiante de Maestría UPTC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lic. Angélica Parra  
Coordinadora de Inglés.  
Colegio los Ángeles  
Estudiante de Maestría UPTC

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### AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_ autorizo a mi hijo (a) \_\_\_\_\_ para que sea partícipe del proyecto de investigación “EXPLORING FIRST GRADERS’ LANGUAGE AWARENESS” y doy mi consentimiento para que las docentes Liliana Fagua y Angélica Parra utilicen los datos proporcionados para su análisis en el proyecto en mención. Propongo el siguiente seudónimo para que sea utilizado en lugar del nombre real de mi hijo(a) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex 2.** Interview Protocol

- ¿Por qué te gusta aprender inglés?
- ¿Por qué es importante para tí?
- ¿Cómo utilizas el inglés en las clases?
- ¿Qué otro idioma te gustaría aprender a parte de inglés y español?
- ¿En el colegio, te gusta la clase de inglés? Por qué?
- ¿Qué actividades te gustan?
- ¿Te gusta hablar en inglés en las clases?
- ¿Cuándo no entiendes las instrucciones en inglés, qué haces?
- ¿Y cuándo un compañero no entiende, Cómo le ayudas?

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# EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ITS USES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES AT INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES INSTITUTE AT UPTC DUITAMA BRANCH

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## **Abstract**

This article reports a small scale study that revealed the perceptions students have in Technology and Industrial Administration major programs. The main objective of this study was to reveal the perceptions of these students about their English learning and its use for specific purposes. This study was carried out with students who are taking English as a foreign language at the Languages Institute at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Duitama branch. The paper also presents the analysis of insights in the process of

## **Resumen**

Este artículo presenta un estudio a menor escala el cual permitió ver las percepciones que tienen los estudiantes de los programas de Tecnología y Administración. El objetivo principal de este estudio fue revelar las percepciones de estos estudiantes acerca del aprendizaje del Inglés y el uso de este para propósitos específicos. Este estudio fue llevado a cabo con estudiantes quienes están cursando Inglés como lengua extranjera en el Instituto de idiomas en la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia seccional Duitama. Así mismo, este estudio

students when connecting their knowledge of English with activities and materials in Telematics and Circuits subject class.

**Key words:** perceptions, Language Learning, Specific Purposes.

presenta el análisis de las percepciones en el proceso de los estudiantes cuando relacionan su conocimiento de Inglés con las actividades y los materiales en su clase de Telemática y Circuitos.

**Palabras clave:** Percepciones , Aprendizaje de Inglés, Propósitos específicos,

## Introduction

Nowadays, students have to possess the skills to be able of facing the issues encountered in the twenty first century. Bearing in mind that all teachers have to be involved in the learning process, we intent to describe EFL students' perceptions about their English language learning at the international languages Institute at UPTC Duitama branch. Therefore, it is relevant to see the perceptions in the connection with the prior knowledge in English and how they use it for specific purposes. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze EFL learning in the students from Telematics in the program of Industrial management and Circuits in the program of Technology. The students from these subjects have to develop workshops and perform tests in English as a method proposed by teachers, who do not belong to the Languages Institute.

Since the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia has different programs such as Engineering , Business, Farming , Tourism, Industrial Design among others, students are supposed to take four levels of English as a foreign language; the

International Language Institute offers different sources such as : articles , online activities , software and workshops in order for students to enrich their knowledge in English in and outside the classroom when they have to face real situations as interviews, in business practicums or when they have to compare and reflect about the technology advances in Colombia and other countries around the globe. For this reason, it is essential to take into account the communicative skills that students got in their English classes in order to reveal and describe the perceptions they have through their experience when the students learn a foreign language and the connection with learners' specific purposes.

Finally, this small scale study is also important in terms of students' process and interests bearing in mind their personal development; therefore, it states the benefits it may bring for students and for the field of telematics and circuits subjects at the programs of Industrial Management and Technology at UPTC which is relevant to say that the students' abilities in their subject-matter fields, in turn, improve their ability to learn English or vice versa. English for

Specific Purposes (ESP) approach enhances the significance of what the students are learning and enables them to use the English they know to learn even more English, since their interest in their field will motivate them to interact with speakers and texts while connecting their areas with their prior knowledge or background.

### Theoretical Framework

To understand the basis of this study, a clear explanation of each of the constructs, that this work constitutes, should be clarified. The constructs which support this study are: Perceptions about language learning, English at the International Language Institute, and English for specific and academic purposes.

### Perceptions about language learning

At Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia Branch Duitama, there are some specific cases where teachers who do not belong to the Languages Institute have been in some way involved through English as a foreign language by means of different experiences and sources; for example, they have presented Lectures in English that have to do with their field of study, they have handled software programs in English, they have also read and analyzed several scientific articles related to their subjects; in addition, those teachers have had the opportunity to go abroad and share their experiences in terms of speech and research.

In the following paragraph we want to describe the connection between Students' knowledge of general English and Circuitos de Corriente alterna Class:

In this class, students have to handle a software which is "Matlab", this program is based on guidelines and tools that are presented in English language; therefore, students with their prior knowledge connect those words with the different functions in the software.



Based on the teacher in circuits, MATLAB is a high-level language and interactive environment for numerical computation, visualization, and programming. By using MATLAB, students can analyze data, develop algorithms, and create models and applications. The language, tools, and built-in math functions enable the learners to explore multiple approaches and reach a solution faster than with spreadsheets or traditional programming languages, such as C/C++ or Java™.

Students are aware of the relevance of being sure of the meaning of each concept that this software has in order to do a very good job when carrying out simulations and graphs; otherwise, if students do not know the meaning in English of each command and tool, one of the devices that this Matlab has in this case PLC, this could be broken

and it would be very expensive for the university, that is why students are very conscious on the fact they have to deeply read the handouts that are presented in English language of every single device, program or software before manipulating it.



In the same subject on circuits, the theory plays an important role in students' perceptions, due to the analysis of scientific papers they have to do at the end of the semester; in this case students have to connect the theory, the method, the performances, and the variables that are reported in each article in graphs and simulations in "Matlab"; at the same time, students show their perception in the fact of having prior knowledge, general vocabulary, connectors, prepositions, expressions among others, in order to do a deep analysis and comparison among their prior information in English, scientific papers and their practice in Matlab.

In relation to EFL Students' perceptions in Telematics class, students have to download from data bases (Science Direct), an article based on Telematics subject in order to do a deep analyses and make summaries to

be discussed in class; in this way, students have to possess a background in English to fund their critical points and support their ideas.

Sometimes, students have trouble with the meaning and the coherence of the ideas in paper. However they realize and perceive the importance on the way they can connect that theory with English prior knowledge and the context in telematics processes. At the same time, students become aware of this connection in terms of competitiveness in their future professional performance.

Since the main purpose of this small scale study is to reveal EFL students' perceptions as an impression or point of view based on experiences, attitudes or understanding on what is observed, analyzed, thought and learnt about their English language learning, we have identified that since students from different programs at UPTC Duitama branch ask for growing the amount of time and lessons in English but not only for communicating but also for their specific areas, therefore, this small scale study let us identify other students' needs which we did not know before. That is why, learners' insights are fundamental to this idea where with some assumptions and theory based on this proposal, we can greatly contribute to the languages Institute.

Arslan and Akbarov (2012) rightly point out that in the past the learning process was only focused on teachers but nowadays is more focused on students' needs, interests and purposes, in this way most of EFL contexts only see English as an aspect but in the way people learn a foreign language to communicate, for pleasure, to know

about other cultures taking into account that in the 21st century students and citizens in general are interested in learning a foreign language for facing different situations in diverse contexts.

These definitions allow us as researchers to have a huge background on what perceptions have involved and demanded; therefore, we can connect this assumption with others that some authors make after their experiences trying to identify students' perceptions in the language learning process.

Arslan and Akbarov (2012), were interested in examining their students' attitudes on the way towards General English and also their attitudes in the direction of English for Specific Purposes, they tried to find the answers in two separate parts as general attitude to English and students' attitude towards ESP. The authors asked 15 questions in connection with students' attitudes and perceptions from General English and ESP classes. 100 students were asked which level of English was upper-intermediate based on the Common European Framework of Reference. They also analyzed the findings by using a Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) . At the end of the experience, the researchers also discovered that a great majority of the students did not think that learning English needed coherence and cohesion to communicate, it is not only to set words but also to connect them with their prior knowledge and of course with their specific purposes, which showed that there was not such a barrier between the students and English. Briefly, they could say that general students did not have any biases

towards English and they had a positive attitude towards English when they connected their knowledge from general English with most of the vocabulary and expressions in their field of study.

To sum up, this study was positive in the way the researchers could find many constructive things not only from their students' perceptions but also from their attitudes towards English. They also became aware of finding more strategies and tools to incorporate vocabulary in the syllabus according to their undergraduate programs. Therefore, students perceived that it would be interesting if they only have English for their specific subjects at least as an elective course .

Finally Arslan, and Akbarov (2012) make an effective approach on what we are looking for with this small scale study; consequently, we agree with their experience because we found many interesting ideas and perceptions from students in a similar context we carried out this study.

As teacher researchers, we also have our own definition for "perception" and it is something that we can see in terms as a whole. That is to say, something from an attitude, an action , to the minimal thing or object and depending on the believe or impression can cause that "thing or action" we decide if that is negative or positive or an aspect that could be useful or meaningful for our lives or purposes.

### **Language Learning at the International Languages Institute**

The International Languages Institute, at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica

Duitama Branch is a sub center of the Languages Institute from Tunja. This institution is based on the same parameters which are established in a handout in 2013. The institute has as part of its mission “academic excellence, the Foreign Language Learning according to the students’ needs and their interests, not only for the local population, but also for the national and the international one. This promotion is developed through quality standards and the openness to pedagogical and technological innovations.” (p.1). In addition, its vision is linked in the following way: “The **International Language Institute** will promote educational offerings, which help solve the current Colombian academic needs and will offer a variety of language courses for both the university students and the external community.” (p.1). Based on this Handout designed by the Instituto Internacional de Idiomas 2013 Tunja, we teachers at the language Institute have to accomplish and achieve these parameters as a fundamental part and role in the language learning process by taking into account the transversely with other subjects and purposes at the UPTC.

Consequently, “The main objective of the General English Area, at the **INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**, is to develop the students’ communicative competence, through the potentiation of the four basic linguistic skills: reading comprehension, writing, listening and speaking; furthermore, two components, grammar and vocabulary. The Institute fixes its programs inside of the Common European Framework requirements to the foreign language teaching and learning processes which contribute to the students’ integral

formation.” (p.1). Based on the parameters mentioned above, the language Institute is working hard in connecting students’ necessities and interests with their English learning processes and their requirements in other subjects and purposes regarding to students become competent in their professional field.

### **English for Specific Purposes**

Chen (2001), cited in his article based on Task based ESP, Howatt (1984). Where he stated that “Since the 1960s, English for specific purposes (ESP) has become a vital and innovative activity within the teaching of English as a foreign or second language movement.” (p.2). On the other hand, Hutchinson & Waters, (1987) mentioned by DR. Pi (1987) express that “ESP is regarded as an “approach” not as a “product” It is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning.” (p. 2). This point of view let EFL teachers know how important and relevant Students’ perceptions are in terms of learning a foreign language in order they can connect their knowledge with their interests and own purposes.

Markee (1988) proposes that “ESP is communication not only because it is learner-centered but also because teaching language as communication is an innovative activity”. Based on this point of view, some ESP instructors use problem-solving methods and techniques to promote the appropriate communicative development of individuals in particular contexts of implementation. Therefore, this point of view has a strong connection with the activities

developed by the students in telematics and circuits when analyzing the scientific articles and using the software, because they evidenced that prior knowledge was used to communicate and to give a solution in regards to their specific own problems.

According to Ypsilandis G (2007) English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was established as a separate branch in ELT mainly due to research studies such as those on register analysis (Barber 1962 reprinted in Swales 1988), discourse analysis, needs analysis (Munby 1978), and market needs. As a result, two separate trends became apparent in ESP: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational/ Vocational/ Professional Purposes (EOP/ EVP/EPP). The former refers mainly to the academic needs of students and of future professionals who would seek a career in the academic environment, while the latter caters for the actual needs of (future) professionals at work”. (p.69). After analyzing this information, we finally found

that since the intention in this study is to know about Students’ perceptions in their language learning and its uses for academic purposes we focused only in EAP which refers to academic needs of the students from telematics and circuits subjects.

**The setting and the participants**

In this study, we had the support of 14 boys and girls; 9 out of 14 are students of Administración Industrial and the rest of the participants are studying Licenciatura en Tecnología at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, branch Duitama. Students, who are taking Circuits and telematics subjects, have to understand and analyze some sources such as : “Matlab” and scientific Articles taken form Data Bases (Science Direct) and put into practice students’ prior English knowledge and the one gotten from it. The participants are students from different English levels from 1 to 4 and they are taking 4 hours of English instruction per week .

Table 1. English Class Schedule per week.

Schedule of Circuits and Telematics Subjects	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
12 - 2 pm			<i>Circuitos de Corriente alterna</i>		
6 - 9pm	<i>Circuitos de corriente alterna</i>				
6 - 10 pm				Telematicas Room 310	

## Findings

In order to obtain the results of this study, teachers researchers present students' responses in the following categories; students' perceptions, awareness about the need of learning English and English for general purposes as a support for specific purposes.

## Students' Perceptions

Taking into account students insights, it was possible to find that English is a requirement as future professionals become competitive in their own field. Likewise, the learners highlighted that English is a mean of understanding specific materials such as handouts, software, and foreign and scientific articles among others related to their own purposes. Therefore, they become aware of learning and improving their level of English in order to display and apply around the world everything they learned in their majors taking into account their experiences as future professionals and their English language learning.

According to students' voices, it is possible to analyze some of their insights

Question 5 : ¿El Inglés tiene alguna influencia en su Carrera profesional?

Student 1.( C) mentioned: *“si, Porque aparte que es importante sirve para traducir textos y tener buena pronunciación y conseguir un trabajo fuera del pais”*

Sutdent 2. (C)” *Siendo pedagogos es muy importante esta lengua no solo por los textos y programas sino para la enseñanza de otros.”*

Student 3. (T)”*por que como administradores estamos directamente involucrados con los negocios y este es el idioma considerado de “los negocios” “.*

Question 2 : *¿En que situaciones le ha sido útil el uso del Inglés?.*

Student 1 (C) *“En los programas informáticos ya que en ellos se encuentra en este idioma”*

Student 2. (C) *“Para hacer uso de las bases de datos de la universidad, o hasta para entender noticias o simplemente para leer un manual de instrucciones”*

Student 3. (T) *“En entrevista de trabajo, trabajos universitarios, visitas de extranjeros”*

Student 4. (T) *“Para comunicarme con personas de EEUU, en un viaje al extranjero”*

Student 5. (T) *“Para tomar información actual en muchos temas como en revistas científicas y tendencias de la actualidad.”*

## Awareness about the need of learning English

When students were surveyed about the importance of learning English, their responses were addressed on reflecting on the need of learning English as a meaningful tool when facing and challenge situations in terms of communication in the different fields by taking advantage of the different resources proposed or designed by Telematics and circuits teacher.

Consequently, they also referred about becoming conscious of the relevance of learning a foreign language in terms of globalization since students have to analyze deeply the up dated information related to the subjects; this is evidenced in the



following responses,

*Question 1: ¿Por qué considera usted importante aprender Inglés?*

*Student 1 : (C) Expressed: “Por la globalización. Colombia ya hace parte de varios tratados con extranjeros”*

*Student 2 : (T) Answered: “Dadas las circunstancias actuales de apertura de mercados y de internacionalización de las empresas”*

*Student 3 : ( T) stated: “Dada la globalización y el intercambio comercial la importancia de comunicación es fundamental más aun en el idioma Ingles que es el idioma internacional. “*

As it was stated before, in ESP is essential the process that students follow during their learning, and how this process help them to connect their interests , knowledge and purposes, in order not to use the language only as communication but also as a way to solve problems according to their own needs.

### **English for general purposes as a support for Specific Purposes**

Regarding to the strong relationship that exists between English as a foreign language and students' interests and purposes , the learners highlighted the deep understanding about the connection among EFL with other subjects such as Telematics, and circuits in regards to put into practice their prior English knowledge in the different activities, articles and materials provided by their teachers.

*Question 7 “Utiliza usted el Inglés en su clase de Circuitos de corriente alterna?”*

*Student 1 : (C) answered: “sí, manejando*

*simulaciones”.*

*Students 2: (C) argued: “si, en el programa de computador MatLab “.*

*Question 7 “Utiliza usted el Inglés en su clase de Telematicas?”*

*Student 1. (T) : pointed out “si, en los conceptos, Programas, lenguaje de programación “*

*Students 2. (T): referred “si, en el desarrollo de talleres y tutoriales”*

### **Conclusions**

This study allowed us to know how important the students' perceptions are about their English learning process at the International Languages Institute at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, making connections between students' prior knowledge, the theory and practices in the Telematics and Circuits subjects.

Taking into account students' perceptions and points of view they revealed that English was not only an isolated program but also the other subjects were involved in students' needs and interests.

The use of different resources in EFL classes is a support when students have to develop other activities related to their majors doing deep analyses of scientific articles, making simulations in “Matlab”, presenting the papers through discussions and of course understanding handouts.

Students are aware of the need in learning or improving their level of English in order to face many situations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century .

Finally, It is important for teachers not only from the language Institute but also from not

language teachers to transform the outcome of the Institute in terms of not only teaching English for communicative purposes but also brings benefits if we contemplate students' needs and purposes in their majors in order they can face and challenge any situation in this competitive world.

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## COOPERATIVE LEARNING: ANOTHER WAY TO LEARN TOGETHER

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview about cooperative learning as another way of learning together in the English classes. Also, as a qualitative study (action participative research), it focused on learning by means of the practice in terms of exploring how cooperative learning helps improve the English speaking skill of students in their English classes, showing it as one more way for raising students' interest in English learning in a scholarly environment.

**Key words:** cooperative learning, work in small groups, speaking skill.

### **Resumen**

El propósito de este artículo es proveer una mirada acerca del aprendizaje cooperativo como otra forma para aprender juntos en las clases de inglés. También, como investigación cualitativa (investigación acción participativa), se enfocó en el aprendizaje por medio de la práctica para explorar cómo el aprendizaje cooperativo ayuda a mejorar la oralidad de los estudiantes en las clases de inglés, mostrando que el aprendizaje cooperativo es una forma más para motivar a los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje del idioma inglés en un contexto escolar.

**Palabras claves:** aprendizaje cooperativo, trabajo en grupo, oralidad.

“All for one and one for all, united we stand, divided we fall”.  
Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*

## Introduction

The debate about language teaching has moved from the “teacher-centered” to “learner-centered”. In that sense, cooperative learning was a means to contribute to the teaching-learning process. Consequently, the next pages provide an overview about cooperative learning as another way to learn together. The importance of this paper lies in exploring on how cooperative learning helps to improve the English speaking skill of students in their English classes, and, of course, sharing the researcher’s understanding of cooperative learning based on his/her experience implementing it with 9<sup>th</sup> graders from a public Institution in the city of Tunja.

Taking into account some previous experiences as an English teacher. First, I carried out some observation sessions on the ninth graders and I made some semi-directed interviews where students expressed they did not have vocabulary to use in a classroom, besides they felt classmates laughed at each other when they pronounced some words in English. Also, I interviewed the English teacher; she revealed her assumptions regarding the students’ poor interest in learning the English language. Finally, through a diagnosis, I identified three types of students: first, students with low interest to learn the English language; second, those who wanted to approve the subject; third, who were eager

to learn English. All those aspects gave cause to develop this project based on cooperative learning.

In that sense, cooperative learning has been used in education attaining positive consequences, Kagan (2001) affirms “cooperative learning is a form of teaching that challenges students at the intellectual as well as the social level and that combines various levels of simultaneous learning processes in an ingenious way”. Based on my experience, I consider the students acquired a variety of ways and skills to learn how to interact with others in the English language in a better way.

So, in this paper, the reader will find an interesting route for not getting lost. First, the literature review introduces ideas like cooperative learning, roles and benefits for learners and teachers, small groups in cooperative learning, speaking in the classroom, autonomous learning; second, the research design takes qualitative research, and action steps research; third, pedagogical design explains categories and subcategories; and finally, conclusions.

## The Participants

As researcher of this study, I am a ninth grade English teacher. This proposal was carried out with ninth B graders from a public Institution in the city of Tunja. The group consisted of 40 students; in turn, they were

divided into ten groups of four students. They used to get low grades and they conceived learning English as a complicated issue and not as a way to acquire knowledge or to know a new culture, etc. For that reason, this project worked the workshops with all the students. In what follows, the theoretical framework will be presented which has constituted the support of this work.

### **Literature Review**

Many generations of people have been aware that cooperation is a life skill since in our daily social life relations involve cooperation with others to accomplish a shared goal.

### **Cooperative learning**

Initially, cooperative learning was thought to reduce academic competition in the students, Coleman's (1961) studies propose that instead of encouraging competition in the scholar settings, schools should develop a more cooperative approach for teaching.

Then, based on the work of Coleman, Slavin (1964) led investigations on a form of cooperative learning and defined cooperative learning as "instructional programs in which students work in small groups to help one another master academic content". Slavin argues that cooperative learning has the potential to take advantage of "the developmental characteristics of adolescents in order to harness their peer orientation, enthusiasm, activity, and craving for independence within a safe structure".

In the same way, Holt, Chips & Wallace (1991) advise that English Language

Learners need "the maximum amount of time possible for comprehending and using the English language in a low-risk environment in order to approach the language proficiency of their peers". It means improving academic and personal performances.

In fact, cooperation means working together. Cooperative learning is to work together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to students and beneficial to all other group members (Deutsch, 1962). Besides small groups are important to work in cooperative learning in order for students to learn together to take advantage of their own process and each other's as well. Johnson & Johnson (1995) stated

cooperative learning efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members gain from each other's efforts (Your success benefits me and my success benefits you), recognizing that all group members share a common fate (We all sink or swim together here), knowing that one's performance is mutually caused by oneself and one's colleagues (We cannot do it without you), and feeling proud and jointly celebrating when a group member is recognized for achievement (We all congratulate you on your accomplishment!) (p. 80).

In that way, cooperative learning is assumed as a "group learning activity organized, thus, learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner

is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others” (Olsen & Kagan, 1992, p. 8, quoted by Oxford (1997)).

### **Cooperative learning benefits for learners and teachers**

In cooperative learning groups, the teacher offers students the chance to interact with students who have a high English level. Also, because it is common that many students struggle with difficult academic material; so, according to Kagan (1994) cooperative learning groups allow students to work in a team with others who have already gained proficiency with the language. This way not only offers a supportive environment for learning new content and acquiring English language skills, but also helps to foster friendships and social development.

Based on my practice, I could conclude that cooperative learning improves academic performance among high and low achieving students. These benefits were demonstrated by ninth B graders, who were used to work against each other to get a high grade that one or a few of them could attain, this attitude was changing because students comprehended that it was not a competition, then positive effects emerged from themselves: self-esteem, social relations, constructive attitudes toward their own English learning process, and motivation.

According to Hamm and Adams (1962), “teachers, who try cooperative learning often adopt a fresh, new attitude to their jobs” (p.28). During this experience, it made that teaching and classroom management

became easier, students had the freedom to produce ideas, and consequently, cooperative learning helped students work together to reach learning goals. It also helped the teacher take more control over the teaching process in the classroom.

### **Small group in cooperative learning**

According to this research experience, small groups consisted of four students, it means, I had forty students in my EFL class and students worked in teams of four randomly chosen members, then I had only ten small groups for instruction. It is common that a student or a group of students had understood a part of the instruction, or what an activity consisted of, the rest of the team members had to pay particular attention and then, they used their joint abilities to explain and to go well with the activity.

In this way, when we worked in small groups with students, they shared their strengths and weaknesses as well, it allowed them to interact, engage and improve their understanding of English; in contribution, Hamm & Adams (1962) state some small groups benefits such as “reducing learning anxiety, becoming a team player, participating in peer tutoring, and building cooperative teams” (p. 41).

### **Roles in cooperative learning**

The teacher’s and learners’ cooperative learning roles are different from the ones they have in an ESL traditional class. According to Cooper (1990) the teacher has some cooperative learning responsibilities such as: planning lessons and activities dealing with the topics; grouping students,

distributing them and making small groups; presenting and explaining tasks; monitoring group activities, intervening when necessary; and evaluating students. (p.56). On the other hand, cooperative learners have responsibilities as well:

“Each group member should make constructive contributions to the group’s efforts. Group members should encourage their fellow group members to contribute. Group members should keep each other on task, working toward their shared goal. Compromise is required from all cooperative learners. Those in a cooperative learning group should treat each other with care and respect”. (p. 55).

In that sense, a cooperative learning teacher must be patient enough for the group members to interact, because groups required a crucial time before the students began to feel relaxed and comfortable with the classmates’ team, and they did their best to help each other and learn together, they adopted the saying *all for one and one for all*.

Perhaps, one of the most difficult aspects of cooperative learning for teachers is to let students produce their own result and solve their own problems. In this pedagogical intervention, both the teacher and the students had learned to work together cooperatively; after instructions, the students had to try to work on their tasks on their own and with the help of other group members and at the end, with the teacher’s help. Additionally to this statement, Cohen (1972) says “a key to successful cooperative learning is the teacher’s preparation. Cooperative learning activities may require

more planning than traditional lessons” (p.94). Regarding the lesson plans (see chart 1), they got the content and in the students’ presentations it took in those contents in their oral speeches.

To deal with assessments, what I observed in the students was that all team members tried to take part and make their contribution in order to get the task done. Hamm & Adams (1962) point out “when it comes time to assess students and assign grades, the teacher may assess what each individual learner accomplished. Secondly, the teacher may assess how well the student participated as a member of the team” (p.45). It means, the student or any classmate who understands the activity could explain it to others. If a student did not understand what it consisted of, they used their cooperative abilities to obtain solutions. Then, the teacher provided feedback group by group.

### **What speaking means in the classroom**

Richards (1991) considers that speaking aims to the ability of the people to express sounds to freely say whatever the speaker wants based on a word perception in a given context. So, speaking is related to listening, reading and writing skills, depending on the speaker’s needs. In this experience, there were some circumstances in order for speaking ability to be practiced in the classroom. For instance, the students interacted using English with a basic grammatical and contextual knowledge.

Related to speaking skill, Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991); Anderson (1980) state that the speaking skill in a foreign language deals

with the fact of being immersed in a real or unreal, permanent, steady linguistic context. Although we are not immersed in an American context, both teacher and students tried to create an environment, taking into account some aspects of this culture: posters, expressions on the wall, news, flag, rock music, candy, and so on. Those elements are important in an English educational setting.

### **Autonomous learning**

It is another concept to deal with cooperative work and small groups because the students build it inherently, for making valid decisions about their learning process. According to Benson & Voller (1997) definition, it refers to the ability to take charge of one's own learning, it means, to take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of the learning (p.12). In my words, autonomous learning has to do with the capacity that we have to act by ourselves and in cooperation with the classmates.

As teachers, we must know that autonomy is not simply a matter of placing learners in situations where they have to be independent. With regards to autonomous learning, Little (1996) argued that "autonomous learning presupposes a positive attitude to the purpose, content and process of learning" (p.13). In other words, autonomous learning aims to help students consider the factors which affect their learning, so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning. The definitions of autonomous learning also

emphasize the importance of the willingness of students to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

### **Research Design**

This study was framed in the qualitative research paradigm with an action research approach. Firestone (1987) defines action research "as a systematic process of inquiry which aims at looking for answers to questions or solutions to problems in a consistent, objective way by gathering, analyzing and interpreting information" (p. 92). In other words, it seems that action research points the way to look critically at schools' daily routine for solving problems, innovating classroom processes, by collecting information in a spiral way: planning, action observation and reflection.

Likewise, Kemmis & McTaggart (2000) reinforce this issue, "action research is used to refer to teacher-initiated classroom investigation, which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom practices" (p. 45). In this particular situation, this research took into consideration the steps of action research:

**Planning:** as it was said above, the English learning concern which called the attention for this study was the one related to raising students' interest towards the improvement of English speaking skill through cooperative learning. During the direct observation of the whole group, through my reflections as a foreign language teacher and of course, through the insights and assumptions as a researcher, I came to the conclusion to explore this issue.



**Action:** the action plan was designed by means of twelve workshops in small groups in order to meet and share students' ideas, feelings, and opinions about the topic we were dealing with. It was an important step to make them aware of their roles in the research experience and therefore, to count on their commitment.

**Observation:** it was important to write down feelings, impressions and thoughts in a diary after each session, and to consign students' evidences in the teacher's field-notes. At this stage it was important to reflect upon three main issues: what I observe, what I think of what I observe and what I should do. Video recordings as well as photos validated and provided support for this study.

**Reflection:** it looks for the understanding of processes, issues and constraints found in the implementation of the strategic action. It also made me look back in order to think about what had been recorded from the observation. The meaning of impressions and data is drawn through reflection and it gave the starting point for the revised plan in the next cycle.

About the field-notes, they were written permanently (after each class), those notes allowed me to make my own reflections upon two main items: experience and susceptible aspects to correct and improve the next workshops. Particularly, it is a crucial point because it is where the researcher gains a deep understanding of what is investigated.

With regard to the research methodology, it involved three instruments for collecting data: teacher's diary, surveys and interviews.

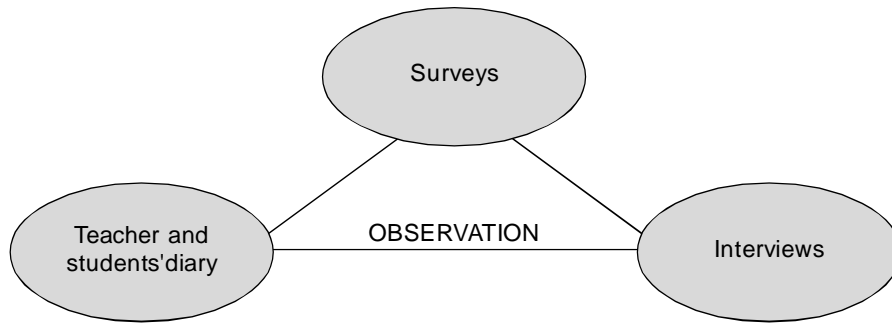
First, I analyzed the diary's information. From the beginning I defined three items to write in the teacher's diary: what I observe, what I think of what I observe, and what I should do. Next, the analysis was focused on the information gathered from surveys. Then, I started the analysis of the students' interviews. I wrote in my diary information related to the development of the workshops, after I examined the instruments' information simultaneously in order to establish the categories and subcategories, and the connections with the research question of this study.

## PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN

It started with an observation to follow the school environment and students' behavior to determine the possible problematic issues to get a global view over what was happening in the classroom and the attitude towards the English speaking skill. Then, a diagnostic test was applied to find out the students' perceptions of working in groups or alone in the classroom, and the sort of material they enjoyed working with within the English classes. After that, with the results showed by the diagnosis, I proceeded to design twelve cooperative learning workshops, one by one along the study, many of them were based on our own circumstances. This means, depending on the topic being studied.

(Chart 1)  
 UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA  
 FACULTAD CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN  
 “ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL”  
 Institución Educativa San Jerónimo Emiliani, Tunja.  
 Teacher: Nelson D'Olivares Durán

NUMBER 4	TOPIC Prepositions	DATE Sep/19-20 2007	THEME Describing locations	TIME Three hours	OBJECTIVES To describe objects' locations	PARTICIPANTS Teacher and 9-B students
RESOURCES	PROCEDURE			COOPERATIVE LEARNING ROLE		EVIDENCES FOR PROJECT
Human resources Copies Pens Camera CD player CD music	<p>-Greeting and organizing the class.                      -Calling attendance.                      -Teacher introduces the topic (prepositions), and gives some examples.                      -Teacher provides a copy with a prepositions list to the teams to work with.                      -Teacher makes a simple sketch in front of the class as an example involving the theme and topic in order to be performed by students in front of their classmates, with the purpose teams realize about the prepositions functions.                      -Teacher gives some commands like: make circles with their teams around the classroom for practicing the vocabulary and organize a sketch.</p> <p>-At the same moment, music is playing; when the music stops, everyone stops too, and at random, the teacher picks a team in order for students to perform a short sketch in front of the class, every team has to perform as well.                      -As an assessment, students say and written ten sentences (prepositions), which their classmates used in their performances, at this given moment, students must understand and know how and where to use the prepositions.                      -As homework, the students would look for some information about US cities, in order to talk about them in the next class.                      -Farewell.</p>			<p>Think-group-share                      Objectives: to ensure maximum description within a group and share information (ideas, feelings,) about places of our school.                      Organizer: increases the vocabulary for describing locations.                      Processes: small groups (4 students).                      Look for as much vocabulary as possible in order to get enough terminology to start the descriptions, talk about your thoughts in each described school place.                      Group success: each student can explain her/his point of view to the others.                      Accountability: share the information and personal feelings about describing (school places).</p> <p>According to my observation, I realized that groups are organized by lines; often, the first students have high scores, while the last students, low. It raises a question: is it possible to involve all students into classes actively? a possible answer could be yes, why not work in groups.                      Concern for previous consideration, I can say that in the classroom, students learn the English language from each other and they will do better if they were organized in small groups for working together to accomplish similar interests. I agree with the statement that a teacher said long time ago: "we must learn to ask what children have learned to do, not what grade they are in".</p>		<p>-photos                      -teacher's diary                      -students' diary</p>
RESULTS				QUESTIONS		
ACHIEVEMENT Students practiced all vocabulary as they can talk about the objects locations.		DIFICULTIES Some students found distractions in their cellular phones.		How to use music as didactic material to get the students' attention to create a good musical environment. Debrief (activity): how do the students describing places?, and how well do the students know their school places?		

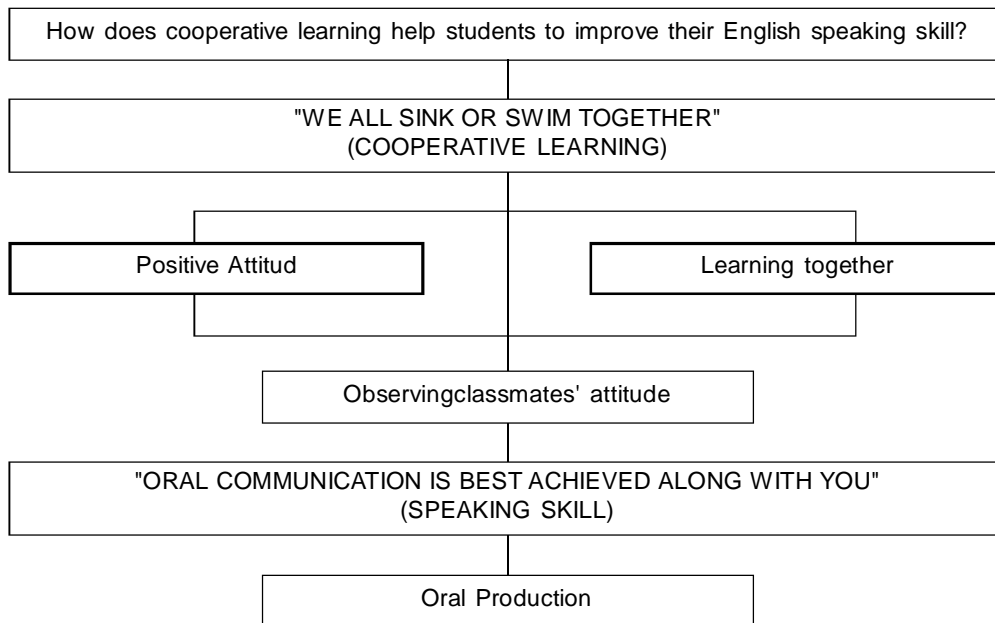


**Findings**

The triangulation of data allowed finding clues to organize and to come up with commonalities among them. I re-read and revised the texts to identify those

commonalities; then, I underlined the subcategories with red, brown, violet and orange; after that, I found mainly two categories as well; in this way, it was much easier to categorize the gathered information.

**CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES**



***First category***

**“We all swim or sink together”.** Hamm and Adams (1962) affirm that “cooperative learning had positive effects on students’ self-esteem” (p. 59). In this experience, it

gave students the opportunity to feel secure when they spoke in front of their classmates. In doing so, all the members of the group had the chance to express their ideas and concerns, consequently, other aspects as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.,

were enriched from each other. They helped each other, it showed that the majority of the students were aware of the responsibility they had in the group.

a) *Positive attitude* helps students cope more easily with other students. It brought constructive changes in the classroom, such as: not giving up, believing in themselves and in their abilities, displaying self-esteem and confidence, among others.

**Subcategories:**

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS	<i>"A mí me gusto, realmente trabajar en grupo porque fue muy creativo y nos ayudó bastante a afianzarnos en nuestro inglés, inglés que flojamente teníamos, y pues realmente la parte en la que teorizamos todo eso que sabíamos y le perdimos el miedo a hablar inglés". (see annex C)</i>
EXCERPTS FROM SURVEYS	<i>According to surveys' analysis, it showed that 85% of the students agreed with the cooperative learning activities. It motivated them because they collaborated with each other, increased their vocabulary, and followed the procedure step by step. It means, they had a positive attitude towards the English learning in this way. (4th question from first survey, annex D)</i>
EXCERPTS FROM TEACHER AND STUDENTS' DIARY	<i>Students enjoyed sharing their ideas in spite of their pronunciation mistakes. Each group came to the front of the class and tried to do their best, acting out to present their work. (Teacher's diary. Session #4. Annex E)</i> <i>"El trabajo en grupo nos crea una Buena actitud frente a la clase de inglés que hace que los compañeros se colaboren para hacer la actividad bien y todo salga bien". (Students' diary. Annex E)</i>

b) *Observing classmates' interest.* The students said that they felt committed to work for the group because they knew that the achievement of the goals in tasks would depend on themselves. In consequence, the result of their work would not only directly

affect them, but also the other members in the group. In other words, the students realized that they had to work to obtain personal benefit and that if they did not contribute with their own part, the other members of the group would be affected.

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS	<i>"...algunos que les daba miedo o no les gustaba el inglés definitivamente, entonces no colaboraban mucho, pero poquito a poco se encontró la forma de que trabajarán". (see annex C)</i>
EXCERPTS FROM SURVEYS	<i>According to fourth survey, the third question showed that students increased their English level through the workshops that suggested the development of the speaking skill in front of an audience. (Annex D)</i>
EXCERPTS FROM TEACHER AND STUDENTS' DIARY	<i>Students are getting more confident talking about real situations such as: earthquakes, hurricanes, terrorism, and so on. They also talked about Global warming (there was a group that shined with their fluent presentation about this topic. It couldn't have been a better beginning of the session. The rest of the students were motivated in developing their own production). Teacher's diary. Session #7. Annex E</i>  <i>"Cuando uno trae un reporte, los compañeros le ponen mucho cuidado para corregirle si está bien o está mal" Students' diary. Annex E</i>  <i>"Nosotros dentro del grupo tenemos que ayudarnos siempre, teniendo en cuenta a los otros compañeros". Students' diary. Annex E</i>

c) *Students reported learning together.* The students agreed that throughout working together, they could improve their academic level in English. In this way, the academic level can also be seen as an indicator that shows how much the students have learnt to say and the degree of performance in the

English language. It means that “all for one and one for all” made students get better levels of achievement. In fact, the cooperative learning strategy helped students to enhance the English speaking skill; since, among many reasons, difficulties were for them better solved in a group than individually.

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS	"...y sí, llega a tal punto que si alguien del grupo necesita alguna colaboración y el otro podía ayudarlo, pues se daba la oportunidad de reforzarle lo que él necesitara". (Annex C)
EXCERPTS FROM SURVEYS	Eighty five percent of the students said that all the cooperative activities were the most adequate ones to raise the English language in the ninth B grade. Why? Thirty five percent of the students said that all the cooperative activities were the most adequate because students found a collaboration environment. (Third survey, question #2. Annex D)
EXCERPTS FROM TEACHER AND STUDENTS' DIARY	The students have practiced the English pronunciation using the songs. They have also spoken about the previous short story contained in a musical video. They have made some speeches about love, happiness, army, war, and loneliness, among other themes. Teacher's diary. Session #11. Annex E  "Hemos aprendido mucho porque nos ayuda a charlar en ingles con los compañeros y nos gusta hablar en grupo, porque es muy bueno y aprendemos más". Students' diary. Annex E

### Second category

**“Oral communication is best achieved along with you” (speaking skill).** Speaking is related to listening, reading and writing skills, depending on the speaker’s needs. Based on this teaching experience, the students worked and learnt together, they put spoken English into practice. Consequently, cooperative learning created an environment where students were able to interact, negotiate answers, ask questions, make presentations, sing songs, watch movies and videos, and talk about

themselves, improving their speaking skill. This category included Oral production as the subcategory.

*Oral production.* At the beginning it was difficult to encourage ninth B graders to speak English. Nevertheless, cooperative learning reduced the students’ communication obstacles. It allowed students to acquire and put into practice vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciation in order to speak and share the information in this cooperative environment.

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS	"El grupo trató de que la persona que sabía algo o si yo sabía algo, tenía que comunicárselo a todos para que lo estudiaran y yo estudiar lo de los demás, y llegar a tal punto de saber todo el tema y saber de toda la exposición" Annex C
EXCERPTS FROM SURVEYS	Contrasted with first survey, the second one (which elicited information from the students about the capacity to use the English language). The majority of students had grown in their speaking skill. Second survey. Annex D
EXCERPTS FROM TEACHER AND STUDENTS' DIARY	Students tried to talk about different topic in order for them gave themselves an important chance to take out the vocabulary that they could have and they did not use. We agreed on Global warming was an interesting topic to talk about. They felt motivated with the Al Gore movie, for that reason they have to develop the second part of the activity better: they are going to prepare a short oral report and they have to do their best at it. Teacher's diary. Session #12. Annex E  "En las clases de inglés hemos sido capaces de poner en práctica nuestro vocabulario de inglés dentro de nosotros mismos y de este modo hemos ido soltando la lengua cada día más". Students' diary. Annex E

## Conclusions and Implications

In context, it can conclude that according to the first category: *we sink or swim together (cooperative learning)* and its subcategories: *positive attitude, observing classmates' interest and learning together*, revealed that the ninth graders were able to put into practice the vocabulary that they knew. The instruments showed the students' progress with the application of the workshops, since the students expressed themselves in English.

In relation to the second category: *oral communication is best achieved along with you (speaking skill)* and its subcategory *oral production* indicated that for ninth graders are important and necessary to work in small groups in order to practice the speaking skill giving the chance to broaden their vocabulary. In addition, cooperative learning allowed the students to express in English what they want to say in the classroom; in this way, cooperative learning permitted the students to show progress when they tried to speak with others.

Independently of students' low or high academic performance, they looked for their group-mates' help, encouragement and support to achieve a goal; it showed that, for students it is important and necessary to learn to work together and cooperative learning is a suitable way for them, since it encourages their interest in maintaining positive expectations in order to create a supportive, helpful and cooperative environment where they improve their academic performance.

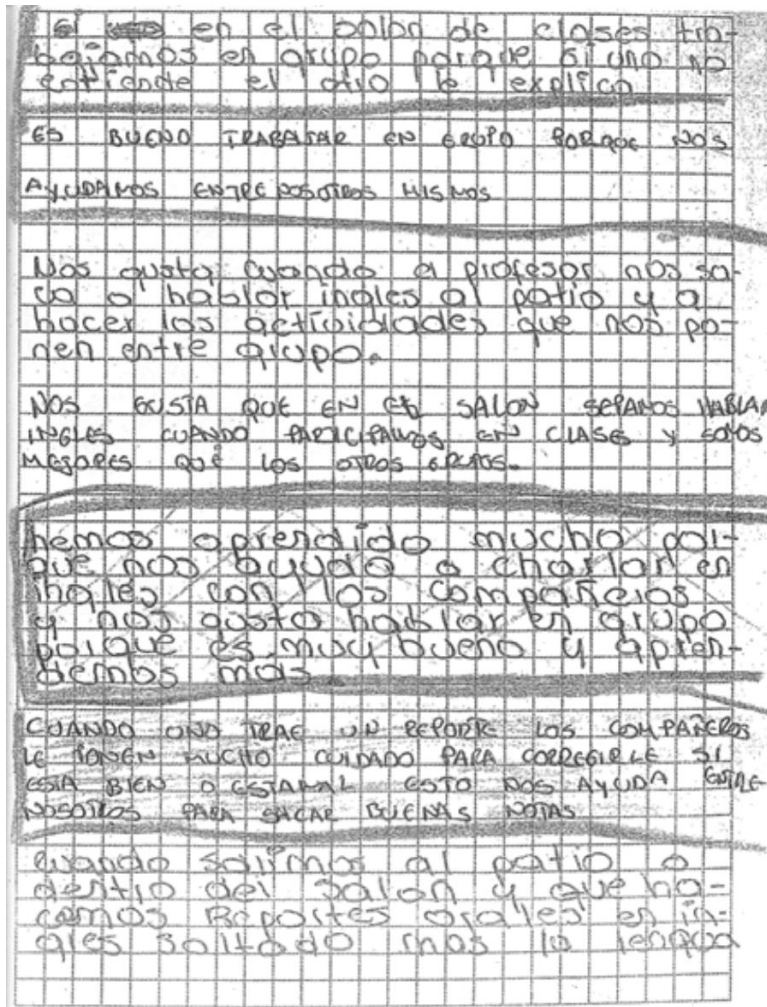
In summary, this research experience, considering the idea of «all for one and one for all», allowed students to gain strengths in an English learning situation where cooperation took the central part. It also lets the students know that teamwork is a strategy in which all group members grow from their achievements and their weaknesses.

As a final point, this paper intends to give colleagues an example of how cooperative learning can be practiced in classrooms. It suggests that teachers can provide students

with spaces to work in groups to improve speaking skill. As a researcher, I hope that the ideas discussed in this article will produce new ideas for those teachers interested in

working with cooperative learning; and of course, for future studies, it could be possible to go forward with this work addressing topics dealing with critical thinking.

Student's diary page



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## L'INTÉGRATION DU FRANÇAIS FAMILIER EN COURS DE FRANÇAIS LANGUE ÉTRANGÈRE

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### Résumé

L'une des façons qui fait que la réalité de la langue se manifeste est à travers les expressions utilisées par les personnes natives pour décrire des situations particulières au sein d'un même contexte. Dans ce sens, le langage familier se convertit, non seulement en un environnement culturel, sinon également en un échantillon des capacités innovatrices et créatives de l'être humain, en tant qu'auteur de formes du langage. Dans cet article, j'expliquerai la méthodologie utilisée par un professeur natif avec une classe de français de quatrième semestre de Licence en Langues Étrangères, afin d'illustrer la réalité de sa langue maternelle, à travers l'utilisation de ressources écrites (telles que les fables et le journal) et audiovisuelles (la télévision).

### Resumen

Una de las formas en que la realidad de una lengua se manifiesta, es a través de las expresiones que los hablantes utilizan en común acuerdo para describir situaciones particulares dentro de un mismo contexto. En este sentido, el lenguaje familiar se convierte, no solo en un escenario cultural, sino en una muestra de la capacidad innovadora y creativa del ser humano como autor de formas de lenguaje. En el siguiente artículo, describiré la metodología que un profesor nativo utiliza con un grupo de estudiantes de francés de cuarto semestre de la Licenciatura de Lenguas Extranjeras, para ilustrar la realidad de su lengua materna, a través de la utilización de recursos escritos y audiovisuales.

**Mots clés:** Langage familial, registre de langue soutenu, registre de langue familier et courant.

**Palabras claves:** Lenguaje familiar, registro de lengua, cultura, sostenido, familiar y/o común.

L'intégration des expressions familières dans l'enseignement permet également l'intégration de la réalité culturelle de la langue dans son apprentissage. De cette manière, lorsqu'on enseigne des aspects linguistiques, tels que des mots ou différentes expressions pour évoquer une même signification, on entre en même temps dans la culture et dans un échange culturel (Da Silva et Dantas-Longhi, 2001: 3). C'est ainsi le cas dans l'expression "je t'aime" qui devient "je te kiffe grave". Il existe différentes expressions pour exprimer une seule et même chose, mais dont certaines sont des expressions familières.

Hymes (1972) et Campbell & Wales (1970) ont déclaré que la langue se considère comme partie intégrante de la réalité sociale et culturelle et, en même temps, comme un symptôme de cette réalité. La langue devient le reflet d'une société variable, qui permet de connaître plus de choses par rapport à la culture d'un pays et ces connaissances peuvent être exploitées à travers l'enseignement des langues (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986).

De cette même manière, et en tenant compte du fait que la langue et ses diverses manifestations illustrent la réalité culturelle d'un pays, qui peut être apprise à travers de celle-ci afin de rendre compte de la pluralité de la culture de l'Autre, il est

absolument nécessaire de présenter toute la gamme, aussi complexe soit elle sur l'un ou l'autre, selon le moment (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986 :100).

Cette idée est d'ailleurs mieux illustrée par l'auteur lui-même dans les phrases suivantes: "La simple observation de la culture de l'Autre, n'est pas suffisante pour la comprendre, encore moins pour l'intégrer, et se servir en cours de langue de faits culturels de façon implicite afin d'améliorer la compétence linguistique, ne garantit nullement que l'élève ait fait un pas vers l'Autre. Ce qu'il faut c'est que 'la conception de l'enseignement de la culture' passe d'une démarche d'enseignement collectif à une démarche d'apprentissage individuelle". (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986)

Implicitement, l'auteur mentionne le fait qu'observer et apprendre les éléments qui composent une langue n'est pas suffisant et qu'en plus, il faut observer la particularité de l'utilisation de la langue au sein de la culture à laquelle elle appartient afin d'avoir la capacité de reconnaître et d'utiliser des stratégies variées pour établir le contact avec des gens d'une autre culture (Da Silva et Dantas-Longhi, 2001:1), et ainsi, il sera très utile de connaître également l'univers de cette personne (Byram, Gribkova et Starkey, 2000:14).

Dans mon cas, en tant que professeur natif de français, je me suis rendu compte de l'utilisation réelle de ma langue maternelle après avoir vécu plusieurs années dans un pays non-francophone, la Colombie, où j'ai cohabité avec la réalité de la langue de ce pays, laissant ma langue maternelle telle qu'elle était avant mon arrivée. J'entends ici que j'utilisais les expressions familières que j'avais apprises durant mes 21 premières années dans mon pays natal tout en enrichissant la réalité de la langue étrangère de mon pays d'accueil les sept années qui ont suivi. C'est-à-dire, renforcer le vocabulaire des apprenants par des expressions communes de la langue française que l'on peut trouver dans les journaux, les magazines ou simplement dans une simple communication. D'ailleurs, les jeunes apprenants aiment avoir recours aux forums de discussion et, dans ce cas, connaître des expressions communes sera plus qu'utilisé pour communiquer en français.

Cependant, lorsque je suis retourné en France, je me suis aperçu que les expressions que j'utilisais dans ma langue maternelle n'étaient plus d'actualité. En effet, après sept ans à l'étranger, de nombreuses expressions familières appartenant à ma langue maternelle avaient changé. Ainsi, l'expression "je t'aime" est devenue moins usuelle qu'auparavant chez les 15-25 ans et il est désormais beaucoup plus commun d'écouter les jeunes français, j'entends ici les moins de vingt-cinq ans de tout l'Hexagone, se dire entre eux "je te kiffe" ou "je te kiffe grave". Dans le même cas, il fut un temps où les expressions "chouette" et "chic" étaient d'actualité en français. D'ailleurs, en Colombie par exemple,

les professeurs de français d'origine colombienne qui veulent promouvoir la mode utilisent parfois le terme "chic" pour s'y référer. Mais, ce terme peut paraître "dépassé" au jour d'aujourd'hui en France.

Mike Byram (1997:52) dit, lui aussi, qu'il est important que "les étudiants acquièrent des connaissances, des habilités, des attitudes et une critique culturelle afin de communiquer". Ceci démontre notamment qu'une langue est bien plus que cela, étudier et connaître ses expressions et sa culture sont des choses qui sont liées à son apprentissage. Du moins, si on souhaite s'épanouir en son sein.

En accord avec Zarate (1993), même si la pratique quotidienne reste trop souvent très traditionnelle, l'enseignement de la langue étrangère se réduisant à l'acquisition de compétences grammaticales, fonctionnelles ou pragmatiques en communication), quelques auteurs sont d'accords avec le fait que le plus difficile dans l'apprentissage d'une langue est la structure de ses phrases, sa grammaire et ses conjugaisons. Dès lors, c'est bien ce qu'apprennent les étudiants en premier lieu. Ainsi, le reste (le vocabulaire et les expressions familières) est un jeu d'enfants, comme le souligne d'ailleurs Bogaards (2001: 321-43) "Il est plus facile d'apprendre et de retenir des ensembles préfabriqués lexicalisés ayant une forme se composant de mots familiers que d'apprendre des unités lexicales simples ayant la même signification mais dont la forme est nouvelle". Si les étudiants connaissent déjà les bases du français, apprendre du vocabulaire est certainement plus facile pour eux.

## L'utilisation des expressions familières est "partout" !

Evidemment, si le langage familier est un mélange de registres de langues courant et familier, cela signifie qu'il s'emploie la plupart du temps à l'oral. Cependant, ce langage et ses expressions se retrouvent de plus en

plus à l'écrit. S'il est évident qu'on ne peut pas l'utiliser dans des documents officiels ou importants (comme dans une lettre de motivation par exemple) ou des devoirs scolaires, les journaux français ne se gênent pas pour l'utiliser... même les plus référencés et reconnus de l'Hexagone (cf. Le Monde, édition en ligne du 17 janvier 2013 ; ci-dessous).



De plus, le Français est une langue vivante, comme tout autre idiome. Cela veut dire qu'il ne cesse de s'inventer et/ou de se réinventer. Et avec lui, de nombreux mots et expressions.

Ainsi, dans l'émission de télévision "*Touche pas à mon poste*", qui allie actualité, interviews et humour, qui passe à une heure de grande écoute et qui est suivi par plus d'un million de téléspectateurs à chaque retransmission depuis le début d'année 2013, j'ai pu observer que son présentateur, Cyril Hanouna, inventait de nouvelles expressions comme "la vie est une fête" ou faisait sa fameuse question à la mode "Comment tu t'intitules?" au lieu d'utiliser l'expression "Comment tu t'appelles?". Des expressions qui, à coup sûr, sont déjà ou vont entrer dans le vocabulaire quotidien des fans de l'émission avant d'être reprises par les gens qui les côtoient.

### **Les expressions familières dans les manuels scolaires**

Les expressions familières apparaissent dans certains manuels scolaires (comme "*Tempo*" par exemple), mais ces livres, qui enseignent principalement la grammaire et la conjugaison nécessaires pour débiter l'apprentissage de la langue, ne peuvent pas non plus en enseigner énormément.

Ainsi, si on peut trouver les expressions du type "tomber dans les pommes", "avoir la grosse tête" ou encore "être rouge de colère", certaines sont dépassées à l'heure actuelle. D'ailleurs, on aura l'air ringard, démodé si on continue de les utiliser, même si cela dépend de la personne avec laquelle on communique. En effet, chaque groupe social a ses propres expressions.

Les expressions françaises font partie intégrale de la langue française. Elles font parties de la culture de la langue, mais elles permettent également d'accumuler du vocabulaire et comprendre un dialogue plus facilement et plus rapidement. Evidemment, le problème est que les expressions évoluent. Nos grands-parents peuvent utiliser une expression qui semblera totalement dépassée à un jeune qui, lui, en utilisera une tout-autre, totalement méconnue de nos aïeux.

Par exemple, on peut dire que quelqu'un fait quelque chose sans être vraiment concentré mais, quel livre a déjà remplacé cela par "être à côté de ses pompes" ou "être à fraise", ce qui est beaucoup plus utilisé dans l'Hexagone à l'heure actuelle ? Entre les expressions quotidiennes et les règles essentielles de la langue, les livres font ce qu'ils peuvent. Certains tentent d'allier les deux. Mais pour assurer une certaine "mise à jour" des expressions françaises, il faudra assurément inventer un nouveau livre chaque mois, et encore...

Pour intégrer quelques expressions familières en cours de français, j'ai élaboré quelques activités qui peuvent s'avérer utiles et intéressantes. Ainsi, j'ai utilisé les fables de Jean De La Fontaine (1668-1695). Celles-ci l'ont été au fil des années dans différents buts. Un de ceux-là a été la compréhension de la culture. Hunt (1999). Dans ce sens, la littérature permet de maintenir les cultures vivantes à travers le temps. Pour cette raison, je vais expliquer comment j'ai eu recours à une fable afin de représenter les idées de l'auteur avec le langage familier pour enseigner le français.

**Activité 1: La Cigale et La Fourmi, fable de la Fontaine “transformée” par Nicolas Philippe, sur une idée originale de “La Cigale et La Fourmi en Argot” de Pierre Perret.**

<p><b>La cigale et la fourmi de Jean de La Fontaine</b> La Cigale, ayant chanté Tout l'Été, Se trouva fort dépourvue Quand la Bise fut venue. Pas un seul petit morceau De mouche ou de vermisseau. Elle alla crier famine Chez la Fourmi sa voisine, La priant de lui prêter Quelque grain pour subsister Jusqu'à la saison nouvelle.</p> <p>“Je vous paierai, lui dit-elle, Avant l'Août, foi d'animal, Intérêt et principal”.</p> <p>La Fourmi n'est pas prêteuse: C'est là son moindre défaut. “Que faisiez-vous au temps chaud? Dit-elle à cette emprunteuse. —Nuit et jour à tout venant Je chantais, ne vous déplaie. — Vous chantiez ? j'en suis fort aise: Eh bien ! dansez maintenant”.</p>	<p><b>La cigale et la fourmi “en langage familier”</b> La Cigale, ayant gazouillé Tout l'été,  Était dans la mouise Quand ça commençait à peler  Rien à becqueter  *Elle partit ronchonner *Chez la Fourmi sa topine,  Lui quémandant de lui filer Du mangeage pour tenir Jusqu'à la fin du mois.</p> <p>“Je te rendrai ton blé, elle lui bonit, Avant le mois d'Août, sur ma tête, je te promets! Et je te filerai du pez en plus !” La Fourmi est une vraie barre: C'est sa tuile.</p> <p>“Tu faisais quoi ?” Elle chiale à cette chouraveuse- Nuit et jour, n'importe quand, Je rappais, que ça vous plaise ou non !- Vous braillez ? Ça me fait une belle jambe ; Eh bien guinchez maintenant !</p>
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\*Les explications de ces expressions sont à suivre ci-dessous.

Inspiré par la création de “La Cigale et la Fourmi en Argot” de Pierre Perret (1990), célèbre auteur-compositeur-interprète français, qui reprenait les Fables de la Fontaine en utilisant l'Argot, j'ai décidé de créer un matériel qui y ressemble mais, à la différence de Perret, qui ajoute des mots et des expressions difficiles à comprendre pour des personnes dont le français n'est pas le langage maternel, j'ai décidé de changer des expressions du texte original “mot pour mot”. Ainsi, ce matériel compte deux colonnes, une avec la fable originale de “La Cigale et

la Fourmi” (celle de De La Fontaine) et, dans la colonne d'en face, j'ai simplement remplacé un mot, un verbe ou une expression du “français littéraire” par un mot, un verbe ou une expression du français familier.

Par exemple, j'ai remplacé l'expression “Pas un seul petit morceau de mouche ou de vermisseau” par l'expression familière “Rien à becqueter”, becqueter ayant pour signification manger. Ou encore, “Elle partit ronchonner” étant un synonyme de se

plaindre et/ou aller pleurer qui remplace ici "crier famine". Dans mon cas, j'ai utilisé des expressions utilisées dans le Nord de la France, ma région natale, mais je me suis également appuyé sur les expressions utilisées dans différents blogs et forums (cf. "Le Routard") par des français situés dans la France entière, âgés de 5 à 65 ans. Avec cela, on peut facilement repérer les changements et ainsi, demander aux

étudiants de retrouver, en soulignant ou en entourant, les expressions qui correspondent les unes aux autres.

A mon avis, c'est une façon simple d'approfondir le vocabulaire des étudiants par le biais d'un texte qui représente la culture française, tant les Fables de la Fontaine sont importantes au sein du "patrimoine bleu-blanc-rouge".

### Activité 2: Former des phrases en utilisant du vocabulaire familier

Expressions / Verbes	Noms / Adjectifs / Adverbes	
<p><b>Se faire avoir</b> (ou) <b>l'avoir dans l'os</b> =&gt; être grugé, être berné</p> <p><b>Prendre ses cliques et ses claques</b> =&gt; Prendre tout ce que l'on possède et s'en aller</p> <p><b>Se tirer</b> (ou) <b>Se barrer</b> (ou) <b>Foutre le camp</b> =&gt; Partir, S'en aller</p> <p><b>Foutre, Ficher</b> =&gt; Faire <b>S'en foutre</b> (ou) <b>S'en balancer</b> (ou) <b>S'en fichier</b> =&gt; Être indifférent</p> <p><b>C'est fastoche !</b> =&gt; C'est facile !</p> <p><b>C'est hard !</b> (ou) <b>C'est chaud</b> =&gt; C'est difficile!</p> <p><b>Kiffer</b> =&gt; Aimer / Adorer</p> <p><b>C'est channé !</b> (ou) <b>C'est mortel</b> =&gt; C'est super!</p> <p><b>Merder</b> (ou) <b>Se gourer</b> =&gt; Faire une erreur, se tromper</p> <p><b>Péter</b> (quelque chose) =&gt; Casser</p> <p><b>Bouffer</b> =&gt; Manger</p> <p><b>Flotter</b> =&gt; Pleuvoir</p> <p><b>Chialer</b> =&gt; Pleurer</p> <p><b>Se marrer</b> (ou) <b>Rigoler</b> (ou) <b>Se péter des barres</b> =&gt; Rire</p> <p><b>Être fringué</b> (ou) <b>Être sapé</b> =&gt; Être habillé</p> <p><b>Gueuler</b> =&gt; Crier</p> <p><b>Ca démonte !</b> (ou) <b>C'est puissant !</b> =&gt; C'est fort !</p> <p><b>Bouquiner</b> =&gt; Lire</p> <p><b>Bosser</b> =&gt; Travailler</p> <p><b>Paumer</b> =&gt; Perdre</p> <p><b>Piger</b> =&gt; Comprendre</p> <p><b>Avoir du cul</b> (ou) <b>Avoir du pot</b> =&gt; Avoir de la chance</p> <p><b>Avoir/Crever la dalle</b> (ou) <b>Avoir les crocs</b> =&gt; Avoir très faim</p> <p><b>Se la péter</b> (ou) <b>Crâner</b> (ou) <b>Se la raconter</b> =&gt; baratiner, frimer</p> <p><b>Se croûter</b> (ou) <b>Se ramasser</b> (ou) <b>Se péter la gamelle</b> =&gt; Tomber</p>	<p><b>bagnole</b> (f) =&gt; voiture</p> <p><b>keuf, poulet</b> (m) =&gt; policier</p> <p><b>clébard, cabot</b> (m) =&gt; chien</p> <p><b>fringue</b> (f) =&gt; vêtement, habit</p> <p><b>meuf</b> (f) =&gt; femme</p> <p><b>mec, keum, gars</b> (h) =&gt; homme</p> <p><b>daron, reup</b> (m) =&gt; père</p> <p><b>daronne, reum</b> (f) =&gt; mère</p> <p><b>pote</b> (m) =&gt; copain</p> <p><b>frangin</b> (m) =&gt; frère</p> <p><b>frangine</b> (f) =&gt; sœur</p> <p><b>bouffe</b> (f) =&gt; nourriture</p> <p><b>maibouffe</b> (f) =&gt; mauvaise nourriture</p> <p><b>de la flotte</b> (f) =&gt; de l'eau</p> <p><b>teuf</b> (f) =&gt; fête</p> <p><b>godasses, pompes, groles</b> (f) =&gt; chaussures</p> <p><b>bordel, bazar, souk</b> (m) =&gt; désordre</p> <p><b>bouquin</b> (m) =&gt; livre</p> <p><b>bouquiniste</b> (m) =&gt; libraire, vendeur de livre</p> <p><b>taf, boulot</b> (m) =&gt; travail</p> <p><b>bol, pot</b> (m),</p> <p><b>veine</b> (f) =&gt; chance</p> <p><b>boucan</b> (m) =&gt; bruit</p> <p><b>piaule</b> (f) =&gt; chambre</p> <p><b>blé, fric, sou</b> (m),</p> <p><b>thune</b> (f) =&gt; argent</p> <p><b>bled</b> =&gt; lieu</p> <p><b>beauf, blaureau, bouffon</b> =&gt; personne stupide</p>	<p><b>cruche</b> (f) =&gt; bête, gourde</p> <p><b>fayot, lèche-cul</b> (m) =&gt; flatteur</p> <p><b>mioche, môme</b> (m/f) =&gt; enfant, gamin(e)</p> <p><b>rencard</b> (m) =&gt; rendez-vous</p> <p><b>ouech-ouech</b> (m), <b>petite frappe</b> (f), <b>racaille</b> (f) =&gt; vaurien, canaille</p> <p><b>Rigolo(te), marrant(e)</b> =&gt; drôle</p> <p><b>dégueulasse</b> =&gt; mauvais, dégoutant</p> <p><b>dégueulasser</b> =&gt; salir</p> <p><b>veinard(e)</b> =&gt; chanceux/-euse</p> <p><b>eusezarbi</b> =&gt; bizarre</p> <p><b>accro</b> =&gt; adepte, fan</p> <p><b>vachement</b> =&gt; très (<b>faire qq chose</b>) à l'arrache =&gt; Bâclé, vite fait, sans grande qualité</p> <p><b>affreux</b> =&gt; horrible, méchant... <b>balèze</b> =&gt; fort, doué, intelligent</p> <p><b>mytho</b> =&gt; menteur/-euse</p> <p><b>bidon</b> =&gt; faux/fausse</p> <p><b>bigleux</b> =&gt; myope, quelqu'un qui ne voit pas bien</p> <p><b>gore, crade</b> =&gt; dégoûtant, horrible « <b>has been</b> » =&gt; ringard, démodé</p> <p><b>stylé, cool</b> =&gt; beau, joli, bien</p> <p><b>mater</b> =&gt; regarder, voir</p>

Ici, l'idée est de donner aux élèves une liste de mots, de verbes et d'expressions appartenant au français familier avec sa signification en français original. Là encore, je me suis basé sur des expressions employées par des personnes situées dans différentes régions de l'Hexagone et de tout âge.

Dès lors, on donne aux étudiants des phrases simples mais complètes et/ou un dialogue dans lequel apparaissent des mots que l'on retrouve dans la liste de mots. L'objectif est de reformuler les phrases en utilisant le vocabulaire familier fourni. Là encore, cette activité permet à l'étudiant d'approfondir son vocabulaire mais elle lui permet aussi d'apprendre/de découvrir, de revoir ou de réapprendre des expressions originales.

Outre ces activités, on pourrait également avoir recours à la musique (chanson, chant), aux poèmes, poésies, aux bandes dessinées ou également aux films pour développer le thème du français familier par le biais d'activités. Par exemple, certains chanteurs français utilisent le français familier dans leurs compositions. C'est le cas de Thomas Dutronc qui, dans son titre "J'aime plus Paris", utilise les termes "périph", "je me fous" ou encore "se barrer". Autant de vocabulaire qui appartient au français familier.

Évidemment, si l'on se demande si l'enseignement de ce type d'expressions est indispensable à l'apprentissage du français, la réponse dépend de la façon dont chacun met en relation la langue avec les manifestations culturelles d'une communauté. L'enseignement des

expressions familières est un complément du cours, c'est une façon d'enrichir un vocabulaire souvent basic, original mais qui permet de communiquer dans la langue et selon le contexte. Car, une chose est certaine, l'utilisation d'expressions familières ne peut se faire lors d'un entretien d'embauche ou d'un dialogue avec une personne d'importance (ex : avec son propre chef). Cependant, il est toujours utile d'avoir dans son vocabulaire des expressions actualisées qui appartiennent à la culture d'un pays et d'une langue ; cela afin de comprendre une blague ou un compliment qui pourrait nous être fait.

## Conclusions

Ici, nous tenons à souligner une fois de plus qu'intégrer le français familier en cours ne servirait qu'à compléter le cours car, il est important de le dire, chaque apprenant de la langue se doit de connaître les expressions originales.

De plus, l'utilisation de différentes expressions, qu'elles soient originales ou familières, marquent une certaine distinction entre les personnes qui les utilisent. Je pense en effet qu'un français de naissance aura certainement plus l'habitude d'utiliser des expressions familières tandis qu'un étranger qui a appris le FLE aura tendance à utiliser un langage soutenu, avec des expressions apprises dans un livre et qui marquera ainsi leur différence culturelle. Je veux surtout souligner ici la différence par rapport à l'utilisation d'expressions "actualisées"... à moins, évidemment, que l'étranger dans ce cas soit quelqu'un qui voyage assez souvent en France pour se mettre à jour.



Une chose est certaine : Le langage est culturel. D'ailleurs, l'adaptation d'une langue à une autre le démontre très souvent. Par exemple, de par mon expérience, je peux dire qu'il existe des situations où en espagnol, on utilise "Suerte" pour prendre congés. En français, la même expression ("bonne chance") ne peut pas être utilisée dans la même situation. En effet, en aucun cas on utiliserait cette expression mais plutôt un simple "au revoir" ou "à bientôt", l'expression "bonne chance" s'utilisant lorsqu'on sait que quelqu'un va passer un examen ou un entretien par exemple, mais en aucun cas lorsqu'on en prend congés au quotidien. Krasner (1999, 79-88) affirme d'ailleurs que "les apprenants doivent être conscients de la façon culturelle appropriée de s'adresser aux personnes".

Ainsi, la problématique actuelle serait plutôt la suivante : les professeurs natifs, non-diplômés dans ce secteur, qui se voient enseigner leur langue maternelle n'ont pas toujours le savoir-faire (la méthodologie) requis tandis que les professeurs étrangers licenciés en langues étrangères (au minimum) ont la formation requise mais pas (toujours) un vocabulaire aussi complet et divers.

Enfin, je pense que l'enseignement des expressions doit avoir ses limites, ou du moins ses explications, car certaines peuvent paraître vulgaires ou à la limite du vulgaire, d'une langue à une autre. C'est d'ailleurs ce qui arrive avec une même langue parlée dans différents pays. En effet, l'espagnol d'Espagne semble plus crû, vulgaire pour un hispanophone de Colombie. Il est donc assez simple d'imaginer la réaction de la même personne

devant certaine expression quotidienne de la langue française.

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## INCORPORATING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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### **Abstract**

This literature review aims at dealing with some issues to be considered at the moment of thinking about the incorporation of critical pedagogy in the EFL classroom. In such way, it explores different points of view given by several authors who have been working deeply on this topic. Thus, it compiles and discusses the most relevant issues in relation to the definition of critical pedagogy, education as reproduction, English language and critical pedagogy, critical pedagogy into practice, the role of the teacher, and the incorporation of critical pedagogy in the classroom. Finally, critical pedagogy is tackled in this document taking into account that it is necessary to look for teaching

### **Resumen**

Esta revisión bibliográfica, tiene como objetivo tratar con temas a tener en cuenta a la hora de pensar en la incorporación de la pedagogía crítica en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. De tal manera, explora diferentes puntos de vista dados por algunos autores que han trabajado sobre este tema a fondo y reúne y discute los temas más relevantes en relación con: la definición de la pedagogía crítica, la educación como reproducción, el idioma Inglés y la pedagogía crítica, la pedagogía crítica en la práctica, el rol del docente y la incorporación de la pedagogía crítica en el aula. Finalmente, la pedagogía crítica se aborda en este documento teniendo en cuenta que es

approaches which go against the conventional language classrooms and the traditional teaching and learning processes that do not have a transformational effect on learners.

**Key words:** critical pedagogy, education as reproduction, role of the teacher, English foreign language classroom.

### Defining Critical Pedagogy

Different definitions have been given about what is critical pedagogy. Morgan (2000) pointed out that Paulo Freire, the inaugural philosopher of critical pedagogy, is known as the most celebrated critical educator. For Freire (1974), critical pedagogy is a way to develop students' ability to think critically about their situation and allow them to recognize connections, between their individual problems and experiences and the social context in which they are embedded. Freire believed voice, social transformation and agency should be major goals of education. Sadeghi (2005) argued against traditional methods where educators perpetuate the relations of power, domination and authority in the classroom, while the learners remain passive recipients of knowledge. Materials alienate learners from learning and facilitate a process of cultural invasion, because the learner is uncritically exposed to ideas imposed from a dominant culture.

Shor (1987) defined critical pedagogy as a radical approach to education that seeks to transform oppressive structures in society

necesario buscar enfoques de enseñanza contrarios a las aulas convencionales de idiomas, la enseñanza tradicional y procesos de aprendizaje que no tienen un efecto transformador sobre los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** pedagogía crítica, educación como reproducción, rol del profesor, salón de clase de lengua extranjera.

using democratic and activist approaches to teaching and learning. Even though the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy is built on a critique of the reproductive process, the most significant defining feature of critical pedagogy is its emphasis on the emancipatory potential of education.

Pennycook (1990) points out that critical pedagogy considers how education can provide individuals with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more democratic society, and thus to reformulate education in a progressive process of collective and individual change.

According to McLaren (2003) critical pedagogy shifting its focus on social class to include issues such as: race, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, globalization and other elements. Thus, he pointed out that the democratic character of critical pedagogy is defined through a set of basic assumptions, which holds that knowledge, power, values, and institutions must be made available to critical scrutiny, be understood as a product of human labor, and evaluated in terms of how they might open up or close down democratic practices and experiences.

Canagarajah (2005) pointed out that “critical pedagogy is not a set of ideas, but a way of ‘doing’ learning and teaching». This definition puts critical pedagogy squarely in the classroom and leads to view how teachers interact with students and how students treat one another, while negotiating institutional and societal expectations. Thus, it is totally related to the principle of problem posing education, introduced as a way of avoiding the banking model in which teachers are active and students are passive in the learning process.

All of those scholars have much in common in their understandings of critical pedagogy. Thus, I reckon at this point that it is possible to notice how critical pedagogy provides principles and suggestions to foster the education, and it is the responsibility of schools and teachers to recognize and address their teaching and learning processes to face with power relationships and starts society transformation.

Wink (2005) pointed out that critical pedagogy is a natural response to current human conditions. Throughout human history the search for new unexplored boundaries, new territories, and new possibilities has been a constant goal and freedom has been the principle that guides this goal. I believe that school is one of the most important institutions through which students can enrich themselves. Critical Pedagogy is a natural response to the human condition that considers the school as the site to save society from catastrophe. As McLaren (2003) stated “schools should be sites for social transformation and emancipation, places where students are educated not only to be critical thinkers, but

also to view the world as a place where their actions might make the difference “ (p. 187).

Summing up, critical pedagogy is about linking learning to social change, education to democracy, and knowledge to acts of intervention in public life. Critical pedagogy encourages students to learn to register dissent, as well as to take risks in creating the conditions for forms of individual and social agency that are conducive to a substantive democracy. Part of the challenge of any critical pedagogy is making schools and other sites of pedagogy reflective about how students can be empowered to transform their community in important ways and how they have the potential to effect change enabling emancipation through personal and social transformation.

### **Education as reproduction**

Apple (1990) pointed out that a fundamental premise of critical pedagogy is that systems of formal education in modern society function, in part, to maintain and reproduce an exploitative capitalist system and this is accomplished when schools are used to advance the class interests of economic elites at the expense of non-capitalist classes.

Scholars working within the tradition of critical pedagogy have identified several disciplinary practices within the classroom that contribute to the reproduction process. For example, Apple (1990) points to the existence of a hidden curriculum whereby students are socialized and behaviorally conditioned to accept hierarchical structures of power. In the same sense, Shor (1992)

describes the authoritarian classroom where students are conditioned to become passive, conformist, and obedient members of society, thus generating easily manipulated workers and passive, apathetic citizens.

Reproduction also occurs when teachers promote a set of cultural ideologies that serve to legitimate existing class dominance. For example, students are often taught in schools around the world that individual decisions and actions (individualism) are the basis of success and upward mobility. The lesson here is that people are ranked in society according to their relative merit and that inequalities in income, wealth, and power are the result of their individual actions.

Giroux (2003) pointed out that another example is the promotion of free market competition or the belief that individual pursuit of profit will produce collective benefits. It is an obvious cornerstone of capitalist ideology. In addition to advancing consent through discipline, curriculum, and ideological content, schools also reproduce the established social order by omitting certain forms of knowledge, including serious analyses of inequality, oppression, exploitation, imperialism, revolution, class struggle, and labor movements that might raise critical questions about capitalism in people.

From the mentioned above, I strongly believe that all the decisions made by teachers regarding programs and classes, the contents, materials and activities to be implemented, and the interaction patterns that are proposed, must be considered as ways of exploring or negotiating knowledge

over different beliefs, interests or values which could be validated or abolished at schools.

According to Canagarajah (1999; 2005), reproduction models of education explain how students are mentally and behaviorally conditioned by the practices of schooling to serve the dominant social institutions and groups; resistance theories explain how there are sufficient contradictions within institutions to help subjects gain agency, conduct critical thinking, and initiate change.

### **English Language and Critical pedagogy**

Kazmi (1997) mentioned that during the past several centuries, English has become a language of power, mass communication, and cultural domination. As an elite language, English has made its way into foreign language education programs in universities around the world. Thus, as EFL programs become more prevalent throughout the world, the cultural implications of English teaching are more often debated.

In such sense, English teaching has been considered potentially imperialistic and it is thought that it can be used to subjugate EFL students' languages and cultures. As a result, I strongly believe that teachers bear a responsibility to use a critical lens for English education. Such a lens could empower learners through reflective dialogue and a curriculum that mirrors the students' goals and interests. It could be achieved considering the inclusion in the EFL classroom of issues such as: the paradigm shift in the assumed roles for teachers and students, critical awareness

development, learners' conscientization and empowerment, critical thinking, among others. Thus, it would be possible that EFL students and teachers examine their perspectives and experiences under meaningful inquiry, which could open students' understanding of why people act in the ways they do.

Ladson-Billings (1994), proposed what is called a "cultural relevant teaching» as using students' culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture.

In the same way, Banks (2001) proposed a "cultural pluralism model of education» as one of multiple paradigms for teachers with a democratic view of instruction. This innovative model looks for focusing on the maintenance of cultures and traditions and promotes the liberation of ethnic groups; to educate ethnic students in a way that will not alienate them from their home cultures». Thus, instructors would not simply briefly acknowledge the diversity of their students; they would actively learn about that diversity by making it an integral part of the curriculum, which is possible through the implementation of pedagogical proposals that look for reducing prejudice in students, language diversity analysis, the planning of units that focus on social issues, etc.

According to Pennycook (1994) language teaching has, for much of its history, been subject to the heavy "evangelical zeal» of the centers which have exported their theories, methods derived from these, approaches, materials, and books to the developing countries "often with doubtful

relevance to the sociological, educational and economic context of the Outer Circle».

Teaching methods view language as "object» or merely focus on "methodology». Second, they often fail to link language with local socio-cultural, political and linguistic environment and neglect students' needs, objectives and interest. They are often concerned with the "what» (grammatical and communicative competence) and "how» (methodology) of teaching, rather than the "why», "how», and "who» of instruction.

According to Freire (1998) language which does not claim to empower the marginalized and the controlled to conceive and articulate their knowledge and needs, or is not devoted to their emancipation, is mere "verbalism». Thus, the issues of power and social inequality that lies behind English teaching are manifested frequently in the forms of sexism, classism, and racism in classrooms.

From the above mentioned, the idea of incorporating different changes in the style of instruction and learning, which actively incorporates learners' cultures into lessons, should be expanded to all educational settings, particularly into EFL ones. The main reason is that foreign EFL teachers' worldviews often differ greatly from those of their students. As a result, a culturally relevant approach could simultaneously inform both instructors and students in a reciprocal way through a mutual exchange of ideas and opinions. It is also important to take into account that the cultures of people are fascinating and complex in their linguistic and ethnic diversity, communist values and relatively foreign cultural symbols.

At this point, Norton & Toohey (2004) pointed out that considering the complex socio-historical and political aspects of language teaching and learning, many researchers suggest that critical pedagogy should be the vital essence of teaching. Critical pedagogy in EFL maintains that both learning and teaching are political processes and language is not simply a means of expression or communication, but “a practice that constructs the ways learners understand themselves, their socio historical surrounding and their possibility for the future». As we can note, it is relevant to discuss the ideological implications of English language teaching and advocate the use of critical pedagogy in English language courses.

It is important to take into account that in an English class much more than grammar or language skills are transmitted and socio-cultural conditions always influence the cognitive activity of the students.

### **Critical Pedagogy into Practice**

Any serious application of critical pedagogy must at some level take steps to facilitate greater dialogue, critique, counter hegemony, and praxis. These core elements of critical pedagogy are generally lacking in the traditional classroom. Darder, Baltodano, & Torres (2003) pointed out that **dialogue** refers to the active participation of student and teacher in discussion and analysis. By transcending the conventional culture of silence proposed by Freire (1974), students gain a sense of empowerment, especially when interaction is directed toward a critical examination of actual student experiences. Dialogue seeks not only to increase active student participation in the classroom, but

also to develop a critical social consciousness among students.

Thus, I reckon a possibility teachers have to incorporate critical pedagogy in the classroom is to use dialogue, which played an important role in engaging learners as active participants in their learning process. Wink (2005) also defined dialogue as: “communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings. It moves its participants along the learning curve to that uncomfortable place of relearning and unlearning. It can move people to wonderful new levels of knowledge; it can transform relations; it can change things “ (p. 42).

By **critique**, these authors meant the systematic analysis of both self and society with a focus on inequality, exploitation, oppression, and domination. An examination of class exploitation is crucial to most advocates of critical pedagogy, but equally important is the consideration of race, ethnicity, and gender-based oppression.

Besides, critical pedagogy advocates the construction of a **counter-hegemony** in opposition to a bourgeois hegemony. Exposing class contradictions in student lives, showing how dominant ideologies may work against their own material interests, facilitates this construction. According to Beyer (1996) it also involves the development of a counter culture where oppositional values, attitudes, and behaviors are promoted. Thus, individualism and meritocracy might be countered with communalism and egalitarianism, while authoritarian and hierarchical forms could be countered with democratic and participatory structures.



Finally, **praxis** refers to the actual application of knowledge to the transformation of society. It moves the curriculum beyond the classroom and connects critical reflection to action in the community. Shor (1987) mentioned that from a critical pedagogical perspective, praxis distinguishes itself from service learning or community-based volunteerism with a more explicit emphasis on collective efforts at social transformation.

### Role of the teacher

According to Morgan (2000) the first task of the teachers, from a critical pedagogy viewpoint, is to raise students' awareness of the reproductive process and to empower them to challenge the system. Thus, the main idea is that teachers make teaching a form of practical, social, political, and intellectual accomplishment, or what Freire (1998) called "praxis». For him, praxis without the regulative ideas of emancipation and social justice is blind; and critical reflection without some concrete content from our practical interest in communicative practice is empty.

In such way, the most important questions for teachers are not only about mere technical and individual evaluation of efficacy of their practices, but also about the potential social, moral and political value of what they do. In order to accomplish this task, teachers have to understand complex and messy situations, ask penetrating questions, provide insight into the implications of their actions and events, and to advise appropriate courses of action.

For Giroux (2003), the role of teacher is redefined in critical pedagogy as

"transformative intellectual», a term he coined to describe educators who possess the knowledge and skills to critique and transform structural inequities. The teacher, as a transformative intellectual, has a crucial role in the problem-posing process which is referred to learn from learners, to welcome and appreciate their perspectives and engage in the dialogical process, which is related to avoid the hierarchical framework, the lecture format and the banking approach, and give an opportunity in favor of dialogue, interaction, communication and exchange of knowledge and experiences among students and teachers.

All in all, it is expected that teachers in both schools and higher education will have to assume their responsibility as citizen-scholars by taking critical positions, relating their work to larger social issues, offering students knowledge, debate, and dialogue about pressing social problems, and providing the conditions for students to have hope and believe that civic life matters, that they can make a difference in shaping it so as to expand its democratic possibilities for all groups. It means taking positions and engaging practices with fundamental ideologies. Educators now face the daunting challenge of creating new discourses, pedagogies, and collective strategies that will offer students the hope and tools necessary to revive the culture of politics as an ethical response to the demise of democratic public life.

Finally, Canagarajah (2005) points out that when teaching turns around critical pedagogy teachers have the ethical responsibility of negotiating the hidden values and interests behind knowledge, and

are expected to help students to adopt a critical orientation to learning. Since everything that already comes with values and ideologies that have implications for students' social and ethical lives, teaching is always problematic. It is part of a teacher's responsibility to help students interrogate the hidden assumptions and values that accompany knowledge.

### **Incorporating Critical Pedagogy in the classroom**

Beyer (1996) suggested that it is possible to identify three main approaches to critical pedagogy. One approach is to take local situations seriously and negotiate with students about teaching / learning. Another approach is to address the issues of power, discourse and knowledge. The last approach is to connect the content, students' lives and the larger context of students' lives through engaging dialogues.

It is also crucial to bear in mind that critical pedagogy is best realized throughout the curriculum under conditions of cooperation and commitment among teachers, what means that if all of them share the same educational objectives and expectations, positive and transformative changes can occur benefiting social transformation. I strongly believe that it would be achieved through an integral curriculum based on the implementation of authentic materials (TV programs, commercials, newspapers, movies, etc.) which help students link their knowledge to the real problems in their society, and at the same time, to examine, reflect and discuss about their representative culture.

The introduction of English language in the classroom has the potential to align with students' goals and interests or further impact the rift between students' values and those of the school curricula. Thus, the purpose must be aimed at analyzing the mismatch between values taught in school and those taught at home.

Umbarila (2010) stated that by implementing critical pedagogical practices, learners are enabled to ask questions about aspects of the dominant culture. They examine the surrounding power structures of the dominant societies through history, and learn how sometimes these kinds of power structures are reproduced when a person assumes the role of the prevailing culture. Moreover, students analyze critically why they have no voice in their relationships in the society and why they may have feelings of isolation and powerlessness.

In such sense, McLaren (2003) stated that critical pedagogy would be the tool to prepare students to be critical agents of transformation in their own lives, as well as allow them to act on the larger social and political struggle rather than be voiceless and passive citizens. Within this framework, students are invited to analyze critically the reasons behind the maintenance of some of these practices through the years. In this way, teachers can help students understand how coercive relations of power limit the opportunities for educational, social, and cultural advancement in subjugated groups and, to discover their voices that have been silenced in order to empower their role of becoming patriotic and responsible citizens to transform the status quo.

Summing up, different authors and researchers who have been working on this topic, suggest different kinds of activities which can be incorporated and implemented in order to contribute to the inclusion of critical pedagogy in the classroom and the educative practices, such activities are: dialogue journals, role-playing exercises, self-reflection journals, dialogues about peoples' lives experiences, problem solving exercises, students' portfolio, a diary of their personal thoughts and experiences, among others.

The inclusion of critical pedagogy in the classroom would aim not only at enlightening and transforming both teacher and students, but also at resisting and challenging the social inequities taken for granted that surround affects our lives so massively. Thus, it requires a classroom environment that is totally democratic where the different viewpoints are highlighted through discussion and debate, allowing a shared dialogue and power among teachers and students.

Finally, just when personal background of the learner influences how something is learned, what is learned shapes the person: our consciousness, identity, and relationships are implicated in the educational experience. Teachers should consciously engage the influences, consequences, and implications of the personal in the learning process.

## **Conclusions**

There is no doubt that schools and classrooms are one of the most important places where students can enrich

themselves, but unfortunately, those conventional places do not have a transformational effect on learners, because they do not address underlying and systemic societal issues such as social inequity, discrimination, violence, and poverty, among others.

Pedagogy as a critical practice should provide the classroom conditions that offer the knowledge, skills, and culture of questioning necessary for students to engage in critical dialogue with the past, question authority and its effects, struggle with ongoing relations of power, and prepare themselves for what it means to be critical, active citizens in the interrelated local, national, and global public spheres.

Critical pedagogy is an ethical referent and a call to action for educators, parents, students, and others to reclaim education as a democratic sphere, a place where teaching is not reduced to learning how to either master tests or to acquire low level jobs skills, but a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students.

The crisis of education must be understood as part of the wider crisis of politics, power, and culture. Education should be divorced from politics. Public services such as health care, childcare, public assistance, education, and transportation are now subject to the rules of the market. Giroux (2003) mentioned that forsaking the public good for the private good and representing the needs of the corporate and private sector as the only source of sound investment, neoliberal ideology produces, legitimates,

and exacerbates the existence of persistent poverty, inadequate health care, racial apartheid in the inner cities, and the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor. Commonplace features of classroom life and everyday experience may be charged with ideological implications. Teachers and theories have to negotiate in terms of the material conditions and social practices of one's community.

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## LO TRADICIONAL Y LO ALTERNATIVO EN LA FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES DE LENGUAS (INGLÉS): UNA MIRADA DESDE LA VENTANA DE LA PEDAGOGÍA CRÍTICA

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### **Abstract**

This article proposes a reflection of the author about the traditional and the alternative as two trends in the field of language teacher education. Such reflection revolves around the question In what lies the gap between traditional and alternative the training of language educators? With this question in mind, the author adopts a favoring attitude of a humanist and critical approach to explain a vision of education as a social practice as crucial in teaching and language learning. Furthermore, the author gives an account of his construction of a vision informed by some tenets of Critical Pedagogy and his experience in the education of English language teachers.

### **Resumen**

El presente artículo propone una reflexión del autor acerca de lo tradicional y lo alternativo como dos tendencias en el campo de la educación de maestros de lenguas. Tal reflexión gira alrededor de la pregunta ¿En qué radica el distanciamiento entre lo tradicional y lo alternativo en la formación de educadores de lenguas (inglés)? Con esta pregunta en mente, el autor adopta una actitud favorecedora de un enfoque humanista y crítico para explicar una visión de la educación como práctica social como determinante en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas. Además, el autor hace un relato de su construcción de una visión de lenguaje informado por algunos postulados de la Pedagogía Crítica y su experiencia en la educación de docentes de inglés.

**Keywords:** critical pedagogy, language teacher education, humanistic education, language as social practice

**Palabras clave:** pedagogía crítica, educación de profesores de lenguas, educación humanista, lenguaje como práctica social

## Ideas preliminares

En tiempos en que el propósito de una pluralidad política se sacrifica en agendas educativas debido a la perpetuación de estructuras asimétricas de poder e imposiciones de intereses particulares sobre los intereses colectivos de diversos grupos sociales en Colombia, surge la necesidad de darle sentido a una dimensión emancipadora de la educación. Al escribir este ensayo, me posiciono como educador de educadores. Esta posición me conduce a discutir sobre la formación de educadores con una actitud favorecedora de un enfoque humanista y de unas prácticas de reflexión e indagación críticas en el campo particular de la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas.

Es conveniente entonces anunciar a los lectores que este ensayo requiere una concepción del currículo de lenguas como el conjunto de experiencias de vida que tienen lugar en la escuela, en la que sus distintos actores encuentran oportunidades para compartir, activar y construir nuevos entendimientos del mundo. También necesita formadores de educadores que se oponen a la rigidez técnica del currículo de lenguas; educadores principiantes que estén dispuestos a introducir cambios en las labores educativas; profesores en formación que quieran expandir sus concepciones de lenguaje, aprendizaje y enseñanza.

Basado en lo anterior y atendiendo a algunos principios de la Pedagogía Crítica, quisiera abordar este cuestionamiento: ¿En qué radica el distanciamiento entre lo tradicional y lo alternativo en la formación de educadores de lenguas (inglés)? Empezaré haciendo una narración breve de la transición que me ha llevado a construir una visión de la educación como práctica social y luego discutiré la relación entre la Pedagogía Crítica y la preparación de docentes de inglés.

## Mi narración y actitud frente a modelos tradicionales de formación de docentes

En mi crecimiento como profesional de la educación primero como docente de inglés y más adelante como formador de profesores de lenguas, mis ideas, creencias, y prácticas han venido cambiando. Como probablemente también les ha sucedido a muchos otros profesores de inglés, en un principio yo pensaba que enseñar inglés era una actividad inocente que consistía simplemente en enseñar estructuras, pronunciación, hacer ejercicios de repetición para practicar dichas estructuras, y de vez en cuando presentar algún elemento cultural interesante, sin saber que en varios casos terminaban siendo elementos estereotípicos, para sentir que estaba enseñando "cultura". Mis ideas y prácticas iniciales fueron el resultado de la forma en la que fui educado como docente



desde el pregrado y más tarde, por los cursos de desarrollo profesional, mal llamados de capacitación, seminarios y congresos a los que asistí.

En mi papel de formador de docentes inocentemente fui cayendo en el modelo de "entrenamiento"<sup>1</sup> (Woodward, 1991) en donde el énfasis estaba en la parte instrumental, el "*know how*" (Giroux, 1988) de la enseñanza; "entrenar" a los futuros docentes en mis clases en aspectos tales como el manejo de la disciplina, el manejo de grupo, las técnicas de motivación, técnicas para trabajar las habilidades lingüísticas, administración del tiempo, uso apropiado del inglés según estándares impuestos por agentes foráneos, y otros aspectos de naturaleza puramente técnica. Esto, en una etapa posterior, ya no me hacía sentir convencido del significado que mi función con los futuros docentes de lenguas estaba representando.

En mi búsqueda por otras formas de educar a los futuros profesores, encontré que existía una tendencia a formar un instructor eficiente que dejaba de lado aspectos críticos de la enseñanza, por ejemplo saber quiénes son sus estudiantes, en qué contexto se desenvuelven, y cuáles son sus necesidades reales (Norton y Toohey, 2004). Aunque el modelo propuesto por Woodward (1991), el que ella denomina "educativo", tiene un enfoque más holístico y centrado en la reflexión de los maestros, vi que la tendencia persistía en la consecución del instructor ideal técnicamente hablando. Parecido a esa situación, encontré en el modelo reflexivo de Richards y Lockhart

(1994) que una vez más se ponía un énfasis en lo meramente instrumental de la actividad instruccional, en ser lo que se ha llamado un "buen profesor", desde el punto de vista también técnico. No obstante, es necesario hacer claridad, acerca del componente reflexivo de estos modelos, en que tienen valor en tanto que es el mismo profesor y su reflexión en donde se origina un cambio, y no como los modelos de entrenamiento tradicionales, en los cuales otros son los que deciden lo que los maestros deben hacer y saber (González, Montoya y Sierra, 2002).

Así pues, el análisis de modelos de formación de docentes basados en la dimensión técnica e instrumental de la enseñanza generó una discrepancia con mi intención de incorporar un balance entre lo técnico y lo humano en la actividad de formación de docentes. Esto me llevó a involucrarme en una transición desde un énfasis en un método ideal y una figura del docente eficiente hacia una concepción de la educación como práctica social que demandara una actitud crítica frente al mundo. Una actitud que implicara la problematización (Freire, 1970) de la educación y que fuera más allá de lo convencional. La preocupación central ya no solo era un método ni una teoría que sirviera para saber cómo enseñar o para enseñar a enseñar, sino también una actitud crítica frente a temas de índole social, cultural, histórico, político e ideológico que trascendieran las aulas de clase y que dieran cuenta de las realidades de los actores en ámbitos educativos (Kumaradivelu, 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> Esta idea tiene relación con lo que Freire (1970) denomina "una educación para la domesticación".

Tal actitud la empecé a encontrar frecuentemente en literatura especializada acerca de corrientes pedagógicas contemporáneas, me llamó especialmente la atención la Pedagogía Crítica, la cual aparecía referida también como filosofía freireana (Shor, 1987; Torres, 2000), pedagogía de la liberación (Dussel, 1972; Cerezo, 2007), entre otras. Miré La Pedagogía Crítica en relación con alternativas para ir más allá de la instrucción y de la reflexión en mi función como formador de docentes de inglés. También vi la Pedagogía Crítica en relación con mi intención de brindar a mis estudiantes, futuros profesores de lenguas, un espacio en donde ellos pudieran explorar el contexto del salón de clase desde un punto de vista holístico que ubicara los aspectos técnicos e instruccionales en condiciones equiparables con los aspectos humanos; después de todo los docentes y los alumnos somos ante todo seres humanos.

La Pedagogía Crítica, la cual tuvo orígenes en la teoría crítica de la educación (Ordoñez, 2002), me dio fundamentos para la concepción de alternativas de sensibilización a las personas y a los contextos educativos. Estas alternativas tienen que ver con procesos de indagación para dar cuenta de aspectos políticos, culturales, sociales, étnicos, de género, económicos, históricos e ideológicos implícitos en la actividad de formación de docentes. Así fue como mi convencimiento tomaba forma al entrar en contacto con consideraciones tales como que la

enseñanza debe construirse a partir de lo que los estudiantes conocen; que la educación debe estar a cargo de docentes transformadores quienes ven su papel no como instructores llenos de conocimiento sino más bien como participantes en procesos de aprendizaje y como intelectuales en control de sus vidas. También empecé a ver como válida la creencia de que conocimiento, lenguaje, experiencia y poder estaban en el centro de nuestras concepciones de sociedad en nuestros salones de clase. Estos aspectos y otros los quiero plantear en el siguiente apartado.

### **Pedagogía Crítica en la formación de docentes de inglés**

Todo lo que se ha dicho y escrito sobre la Pedagogía Crítica<sup>2</sup> inmediatamente nos remite al pedagogo Paulo Freire y a los años mil novecientos sesenta. Freire fue y continúa siendo el inspirador de varios académicos e investigadores en las ciencias de la educación quienes abordan temáticas entre las cuales se puede mencionar las formas de poder en las relaciones sociales, fenómenos de dominación, la educación democrática, las diferencias entre educación pública y educación popular, entre otras. Freire representa una concepción de una cultura liberadora en la cual los oprimidos interpretan sus realidades y las transforman con el propósito de abolir distintas formas de dominación y opresión en las estructuras sociales. Los oprimidos para Freire eran los que trabajaban la tierra

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<sup>2</sup> He venido escribiendo Pedagogía Crítica con mayúscula inicial a propósito para referirme solo a aquella pedagogía inspirada y promulgada por Freire. Sin embargo, en la literatura se pueden encontrar referencias a otras "pedagogías críticas" (Norton y Toohey, 2004).

en su país, Brasil, y fueron ellos por quienes él desarrolló un sistema de alfabetización revolucionario, no bien visto por las clases político-económicas dominantes, que tenía dentro de sus principios el de leer el mundo antes de leer la palabra (lectura crítica) y una oposición a las prácticas alienantes (educación "bancaria") que consideraban a los educandos como ignorantes y solo depositarios pasivos de información transmitida por los docentes<sup>3</sup>.

La Pedagogía Crítica no es un método, en acuerdo con McLaren (2003), la Pedagogía Crítica es una forma de vida relacionada con la educación como profesión. Si nos concentramos en nuestra vida profesional, la Pedagogía Crítica tendrá que ver con qué y cómo nuestros estudiantes aprenden y qué y cómo nosotros enseñamos desde una perspectiva social (Norton y Toohey, 2004). Ver la Pedagogía Crítica desde esta perspectiva nos permite asumir las prácticas pedagógicas como una tarea que implica asignar nombres a fenómenos educativos, reflexionar sobre ellos críticamente y actuar sobre esos mismos fenómenos (Wink, 2005).

En la misma línea de pensamiento, la Pedagogía Crítica tiene un principio que contiene otros principios para las prácticas de enseñanza y aprendizaje, este es el del entendimiento de que el mundo es una entidad multidimensional que implica una multiplicidad de visiones de la vida escolar. En este sentido, la enseñanza y el aprendizaje son causa y consecuencia de las prácticas sociales, políticas, ideológicas, culturales, económicas e históricas

(Guerrero y Quintero, 2004). Esto implica que los profesores desempeñen también el papel de aprendices y no únicamente el papel de transmisores de conocimiento prefabricado (Freire, 1992). Esto significa que los profesores aprenden con y de sus estudiantes (Shor y Freire, 1987). Para esto se requiere una interacción dialógica y empoderadora entre estudiantes y profesores (Shor y Freire, 1987; McLaren 2003). En la interacción dialógica, la dimensión política de la educación se convierte en una preocupación central en la cual las decisiones curriculares tomadas por el profesor tienen una influencia fuerte sobre el currículo oficial y el oculto a los cuales están expuestos los estudiantes.

Todo lo anterior tiene lugar en la escuela como un contexto institucional. Los profesores necesitan aprender acerca de sus estudiantes, identificarse con ellos, construir a partir de las fortalezas de los estudiantes y enfrentar los retos propuestos por los prejuicios inherentes a las muestras de privilegios dentro de estas instituciones donde ellos enseñan (Nieto, 2010). Este es un trabajo arduo porque requiere prestar atención a los diferentes factores de la vida escolar, y eso está inevitablemente acompañado por conflictos, es decir una dimensión dialéctica (Shor & Pari, 2000).

Extendiendo la discusión sobre la actividad de aprender, la Pedagogía Crítica plantea alternativas a los profesores la oportunidad de aprender, re-aprender y desaprender (Wink, 2005). Estas tres actividades se realizan a través de leer, escribir, hablar, escuchar, vivir, vivenciar, hacer, involucrase,

<sup>3</sup> Este y otros principios hacen parte de su obra mundialmente conocida "Pedagogía del oprimido" (1970).

interactuar, formular problemas, solucionar problemas y asumir riesgos. Aprender no es siempre una experiencia agradable, para que esto suceda se necesita un ambiente sano y seguro, el cual esta proporcionado, entre otras cosas, por el contexto y las personas quienes se encuentran en él.

Es claro además que los profesores sitúan el aprendizaje en las vidas y culturas del aprendizaje, es decir el aprendizaje es experiencial y el conocimiento es visto como algo real y tangible (Shor, 1987). Resaltando la dimensión social de la educación (Vigotsky, 1989), se puede afirmar que el aprendizaje necesita situarse en el contexto inmediato de los involucrados, construirse socialmente, presentarse como complejo y multidireccional en el proceso de construcción de conocimiento (Shor & Freire, 1987).

Pasando ahora a discutir la relación entre la Pedagogía Crítica y la parte disciplinar implícita en mi escrito, es decir el lenguaje, es de resaltar el planteamiento de Nieto (2010) sobre la escuela como un contexto y serie de dinámicas mediadas por el lenguaje. El lenguaje es un vehículo que no solamente revela las relaciones dialógicas entre profesores y estudiantes, sino que también las construye (Pennycook, 2001).

Lenguaje entonces, entendido también como una práctica social, es algo que abarca mucho más que un simple código o lengua. Esto tiene que ver con una concepción alternativa del lenguaje. Podríamos decir que las voces que claman la necesidad de adoptar una perspectiva crítica en el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas, en particular de la lengua inglesa,

no son nuevas. Pennycook (1990) y Phillipson (1992) cuestionan el papel de los profesores de inglés y los intereses que éstos sirven al distribuir de la ideología y valores del mundo Anglo-Americano a través de la enseñanza de esa lengua. Este cuestionamiento es una llamada a que otras voces se unan para invitar a los profesores de inglés alrededor del mundo a adoptar una perspectiva crítica en su quehacer docente.

Una de las características importantes de las disciplinas críticas, que se desprenden de la teoría crítica de la educación y por ende de la Pedagogía Crítica, tales como lingüística aplicada crítica, análisis crítico del discurso, lectoescritura crítica y evaluación crítica, es la de develar la supuesta "neutralidad" de los diferentes campos de la educación. La enseñanza y aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa no puede ser excepción a esto. Dicha neutralidad se ha venido construyendo en tres campos que están íntimamente relacionados: el inglés como lengua extranjera, la adquisición de la segunda lengua y la enseñanza del inglés a hablantes de otras lenguas. Para efectos del presente ensayo, únicamente discutiré el tercer campo.

En la enseñanza del inglés a hablantes de otras lenguas, el paradigma instrumentalista ha predominado; la enseñanza del inglés se ha concebido como un proceso técnico, una trasmisión inocente de reglas lingüísticas donde el papel de los profesores es implementar lo que los expertos dictan (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1990). Por tal motivo, este campo ha estado obsesionado con la producción de métodos instruccionales (Canagarajah, 1999) cuyo objetivo principal es encontrar la mejor y

más eficiente forma de enseñar inglés (Ramanathan, 2002). Los profesores de inglés no se incentivan a cuestionar aspectos sociopolíticos (Kincheloe, 2004; Ramanathan, 2002) y mucho menos a problematizar el valor asimétrico asignado a los diferentes componentes del currículo, o a las prácticas discriminatorias en la escuela y cómo todos estos elementos se relacionan con el contexto externo en el que ésta se inscribe.

Para Pennycook (1998) esta visión apolítica de la enseñanza del inglés es el resultado de una fuerte conexión entre este campo y el colonialismo, la cual se hace evidente en la forma como las agencias occidentales dedicadas a la difusión del inglés alrededor del mundo, transmiten su forma de ver el mundo por medio de los libros de texto, programas de entrenamiento de profesores, exámenes estandarizados, certificados internacionales, talleres y conferencias (Canagarajah 1999; Pennycook, 1994).

Sumado a lo que hacen las agencias internacionales, los programas de formación de docentes también tienen responsabilidad en la distribución de esta ideología de pretendida neutralidad del inglés y contribuyen a mantener a los futuros docentes desvinculados del análisis crítico de sus prácticas, de varias formas. Para mencionar solo algunas: 1) Los programas de formación de profesores se organizan independientemente de otras disciplinas académicas (Pennycook, 2004) lo que ocasiona que los futuros docentes no tengan otras perspectivas que informen sus prácticas. 2) Estos programas tienen un fuerte enfoque en el currículo, en la selección y secuenciación de los temas

(Pennycook, 1990) pero no en la forma como éstos se interrelacionan, o por qué unos contenidos se incluyen y otros se excluyen, qué intereses se sirven y qué intereses se ignoran. 3) Se espera que los docentes en formación manejen las metodologías y sean capaces de implementarlas en el salón de clase (Giroux, 1988); y 4) Tener una pronunciación de, o cercana a, un hablante nativo del inglés es una habilidad sumamente valorada (Francis y Ryan, 1998).

Estos cuatro elementos, y muchos más que no se han mencionado aquí, que se imponen desde afuera, influyen en la forma como los futuros maestros adoptarán y ejercerán su práctica pedagógica; algunos serán agentes pasivos que contribuirán a la perpetuación de la ideología de la neutralidad de la profesión y otros actuarán en la resistencia (Canagarajah, 1999) con la idea de que la enseñanza no es neutral y mucho menos la enseñanza del inglés (Apple, 2006).

## Conclusión

Consciente de que un componente práctico es deseable en este ensayo, por restricciones de espacio y tiempo solo he hecho solo una aproximación un tanto teórica hacia el entendimiento de modelos dinámicos y alternativos de formación de educadores iluminados por principios de la Pedagogía Crítica en contraste con modelos instruccionales estáticos tradicionales en el campo de la educación de la lengua inglesa. Así pues, y cerrando con una posible respuesta al cuestionamiento planteado al inicio, continuo convencido acerca de mi función como formador de futuros docentes

de inglés, la cual incluye mostrarles una forma alternativa de desarrollar su práctica docente pero sin darles las recetas infalibles, típicas de los modelos inmediatistas tradicionales (Whitmore y Goodman, 1996). Considero además que el concepto de educación de docentes debe transformarse y adoptar un enfoque reflexivo-crítico, en donde el docente en formación asuma una posición activa, participativa y crítica (Kincheloe, 2004). Sobre esto, los formadores de futuros docentes debemos fijarnos como meta principal facilitarles espacios para evaluar sus creencias acerca de la enseñanza, del aprendizaje y del lenguaje. Así mismo, es crucial dentro de este proceso, promover en ellos la investigación como fuente generadora de conocimiento (Munevar y Quintero, 2000) para que de esta manera contribuyan al fortalecimiento de la educación de sus comunidades escolares y de su propia fundamentación teórica y práctica.

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## PEDAGOGICAL AND RESEARCH PROJECTS: A PATH TO EMPOWER PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS TO FACE THEIR CHALLENGES

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### **Abstract**

Being a teacher today embraces new challenges and possibilities for pre-service and in-service teachers as well as for prospective teachers and their contexts in order to enrich and/ or transform educational practices. Some of these challenges deal with: the need to have a knowledge base of the subject and specifically a high level of Communicative Competence in the foreign language; a general and specific pedagogical knowledge; an understanding about the conception and execution of the curriculum and an appropriation of the teaching-learning theory. The mentioned aspects constitute a base in their professional development. Pedagogical and Research Projects in the Languages School

### **Resumen**

Ser profesor hoy abarca nuevos retos y posibilidades para los profesores-practicantes y profesores en ejercicio y sus contextos para enriquecer y/o transformar las prácticas educativas. Algunos de estos retos tienen que ver con: la necesidad de tener un conocimiento base de la materia y específicamente un alto nivel de Competencia Comunicativa de la Lengua Extranjera; un conocimiento pedagógico general y específico; una comprensión acerca de la concepción y ejecución del currículo y una apropiación de la teoría de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Los aspectos mencionados constituyen una base en su desarrollo profesional. Los Proyectos Pedagógicos e Investigativos (PPI) en la

at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) incorporate these aspects in their syllabus in order to face the prospective teachers to the realities they will handle as future ones. The aim of this article is to reflect upon the challenges, knowledge and policies around teaching a foreign language nowadays and discuss what prospective teachers can understand around pedagogy and research as the bridge to link what they study and reflect in classes and the realities they have to face as future Foreign Languages teachers.

**Key words:** Pedagogical and Research Projects, Knowledge base, future teachers 'challenges.

## Introduction

Being an EFL teacher nowadays demands many challenges, Gonzalez (2000) states that there are many responsibilities and knowledge we have to handle; it means to have a degree, good language proficiency, to know and to have different methodologies, to possess certain theoretical foundations in FLA, (Foreign Language Acquisition), to be updated in technologies, and to be aware of diversity. Moreover, Richards (1998) proposes six domains to be a FL teacher: theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning, decision making, and context knowledge. Experiences as teachers educators have showed that pre-service and in- service teachers need to

Escuela de Idiomas de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia incorporan en su Syllabus estos aspectos con el fin de mostrar a los futuros profesores las realidades que enfrentarán como futuros maestros. El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar sobre los desafíos, el conocimiento y las políticas en torno a la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera en la actualidad y reflexionar con los futuros profesores lo que puedan entender alrededor de la pedagogía y la investigación como el puente para vincular lo que se estudia y se reflexiona en las clases y las realidades que enfrentan como futuros maestros de Lenguas Extranjeras.

**Palabras clave:** Proyectos Pedagógicos e Investigativos, conocimiento base, retos de los futuros profesores

know different theories and knowledge to put in practice in their classes.

Shulman (1987) proposed the following categories about teachers' Knowledge base and they included: content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends as well as purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. As we can see, all are challenges we have to face in our everyday teaching practices. However, the reality demands more than those mentioned above; a teacher has to deal with different students' behaviors, limited use of EFL in the classroom, different educational contexts, where students and

teachers have limited sources, just to mention some of them.

The first category, “*content knowledge*” has to deal with the knowledge that a teacher has in terms of structures, contents, and cultural aspects around language. And as Pineda (2002) in Day and Concklin (1992) Content Knowledge is what a Foreign Language Teacher teaches. In “*General Pedagogical knowledge*”, the teachers puts into practice the strategies, techniques and practices to manage the classroom and its atmosphere. The third category “*Pedagogical content knowledge*” refers to the way teachers teach, how is the subject communicated to others, how “it is comprehensive for other people” Pineda (2002:11). “*Curricular Knowledge*” deals with the curricular choices that a teacher has to follow in terms of instruction, programs and its objectives, materials, evaluation, and so on. All in order to accomplish a meaningful learning.

Following the categories, the fifth one, “*Knowledge of the learner*” deals with the fact of knowing the kind of students we have, if they are children, teenagers or adults. And beyond that, the context they belong to: rural areas or urban areas, and in this last area, if they study in a public or a private school. It refers to the diversity teachers have to face in the same classroom, the multiple intelligences students have and the different styles of learning they have to take into account when teaching the foreign language.

These different characteristics imply that the pre-service teacher needs to know the

physical and cognitive development students have. Pineda (2002:11) On the other hand, “*Knowledge of Educational goals and Philosophical Bases*”, embraces what the society expects from the Foreign Language teachers, as Rafael Arteaga, Ligia Cortez and Jairo Hernández (2007) discussed in a panel at Universidad Nacional (UN) in Bogotá. In that panel, all of them agreed that to learn and to teach a foreign language deals not only with the last tendencies in teaching it, but also in knowing the policies that guide the education system and the decisions that a teacher has to face when he/she is inserted in the system. Pineda (2002).

Teaching has important challenges into the society; they deal with not only teaching a subject, but also to engage students into historical, political, economical and personal issues (Freire, 1997). In this perspective, education is the most important base into the society development. Taking into account the previous statement, we as EFL teachers have big challenges that empower our reason of being teachers. Besides, dynamic changes in social, cultural, technological, political and academic issues we are facing, demands us to give the future teachers the right tools to face these new ways of teaching.

We would like to bear in mind some ideas from González (2000) proposal in regards to the same challenges that the new millennium presents us. One challenge is the *language proficiency* that an English teacher should have. Our experiences have shown how technology, webs and general information are giving the students certain

level of using the FL; because most of them have learnt English through technology and our children and young people are being educated by the television and Internet. This makes teachers wonder about our place in the school settings and for the citizen formation to develop the pedagogical practice with a key question: How do EFL teachers educate students with enough ethics, moral and intellectual tools to face the amount of information that they face at the time? Thus, it is not only to have the highest proficiency but also to handle classroom management, strategies, materials, among others; and most importantly, how to deal with ethics and moral responsibility when we teach. The aforementioned is being discussed into the pedagogical projects classes and it has been reflected with the future teachers, in order to guide them into the classes' observation to focus their observations in realities they have to face when they become teachers.

The second challenge is *to know the diversity of contexts*, the same teacher may work with adults, children, and teenagers, and they may teach ESP; thus, Gonzalez (2000) highlights that the universities must provide training in various settings and diverse populations. In the case of the Pedagogical Projects, students have to observe different classes in different settings (public or private, primary or secondary). During these experiences in the different contexts, they have the opportunity to know about the PEI (Proyecto Educativo Institucional). The purpose of doing it is to analyze and contrast what they have reflected in theory with what they find in it and what they perceive in the real context.

Besides that, they have the possibility to systematize their analysis through interviews addressed to school administrators and teachers.

Moreover, students study about curriculum, pedagogy and didactics and they contrast the theory about these aspects knowing a real curriculum in a school, making connections and contrasting with in service teachers' surveys or interviews; and observing classes again, but this time, relating curriculum, pedagogy and didactics and all the theory around them. Finally, prospective teachers have the opportunity to be involved in different contexts around the students' issues in different settings. Problems such as bullying, racism, inclusion, poverty, familiar violence, displacement, and so forth, are studied, analyzed and contrasted in real life through small-scale projects. Prospective teachers conduct a research problem, some objectives and a pedagogical intervention to overcome some issues aforementioned; they contrast the problem with the theory and put it into practice.

Different experiences have shown how an EFL teacher has to handle different context when he/she starts working: primary, secondary and universities. Pineda (2002) claims that we as teachers must focus on the learning process of our students; that is, knowledge about how children, adolescents and adults learn. Kumaravadelu (2003) goes further, he states that people use English according to their individual and institutional needs; it means that teachers must contextualize himself/herself depending on the institution

he/she is going to work in: private or public. Smith (1976) claimed that learning a (FL)foreign language depends on the people, places and purposes to learn it. In this sense, the Pedagogical Project classes offer them the opportunity to observe different types of students, they observe classes with children, with adolescents, in urban and rural areas. These different contexts give them opportunities to know in first person how to learn to manage students in different levels and social conditions.

Another challenge is *the access or lack of access to resources*; teachers must handle resources from the most sophisticated ones, such as computer devices, video beams, and so on; until “scarce resources that are quite frequently a reality for our EFL teachers”. González (2000:1). Furthermore, teachers must consider how to elaborate materials to support the instructional design component of their classes. In spite this elaboration is a time consuming activity and requires dedication, patience and some expertise. “It is a unique experience in which teachers can cater to specific learning objectives and learning styles. Moreover, materials designed by the teachers are more likely to be updated and manageable”. Nuñez et al. (2004:129). That is, they have the possibility to place the learner as the center of the language learning process, and at the same time to explore their creativity by designing materials for their classes.

The fourth challenge is *the implementation of classroom-based research*. As we know our future teachers are not only to be teachers, but also to be researchers; therefore, we should start giving them the

opportunity of knowing the different ways of researching in our classroom settings. Every aspect we guide students to learn must be “permeated” by research projects. We can start with small-scale research projects in our classrooms to engage them to do it in their practices; in that way, they can start to rethink their final proposal and their future researches they could apply to enhance their teaching and learning process.

Research skills are the result of reflecting around two important aspects: classroom observation and experience as learners. That is, to put in practice the different theories students-teachers learning through their academic background and prior knowledge they had. A teacher educator who favors a humanistic, inquiring, and critical approach to language teaching and learning. As Piñeros and Quintero (2006) claim “a teacher educator who opposes the rigidity of a technical view of language curriculum... who conceives language curriculum as a set of school life experience in which both teachers and students find opportunities to share, activate, and built new understandings of the world” (p. 174). It is researching to improve our role as EFL teachers.

Our last challenge is based on a question EFL teachers have asked: *What does the Colombian society expect from the FL teachers?* And it is evident that we have to teach the FL very good; and what does it mean? That teaching responds to some needs, and what kind of needs? And probably it could be the country needs, but also the learners’ needs. Thus, it will depend on the following order: first, students;

second, teachers; then, family and lastly, society in which our students will project themselves, and which they are part of it. Arteaga et al. (2007).

To try to establish those needs, we have to allude to two important sources: first, the new tendencies or current practices in teaching the EFL; Arteaga (2008) says these tendencies are related to teachers-researchers who have worked and reflected about the EFL teaching would be; these would be based on the world requirements where we live today and to justify them theoretically. Second, we as EFL teachers must bear in mind the Colombian legislation, Which hopefully recovers the country feeling and it concretes the goals, as we as nation follow. It means the way we as teachers conceive policies around teaching and learning in our country, and how the society perceives them.

## Conclusions

Nowadays, a reflective prospective-teacher, should know the different transformations of knowledge, with all its demands and challenges that González (2000) suggests and the particular case of the foreign languages teachers or the knowledge that Schulman (1997) talks about it. Pedagogical and research projects have constituted a bridge to face the student-teachers to the real situation in the educational context.

The learning has important roles inside the society; this has to deal not only with teaching the subject, but also with the students in their historical, social, economic

and personal issues. Through this perspective, the education is the most important base of development in a society.

Bearing in mind what was mentioned before, we as FL Teachers have big challenges in order to empower our reason of being teachers. Besides, the dynamic changes in the social, cultural technologic, politic and academic matters, asks to us as teachers, trainers of the future teachers, to think about how to give them the right tools to face the world.

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## LA MUERTE DE LAS LENGUAS: HACIA UNAS CONSIDERACIONES GENERALES

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### **Abstract**

This article provides some general considerations about language death . The paper first presents a definition of this interesting phenomenon; it discloses some of the ways of disappearing languages; then the article proposes information about causes of language death; later, it shows some general aspects of endangered languages extinction, and the resurrection of languages. Finally, the article concludes with some general ideas on the topics addressed.

**Key words:** Sociology of language, language death, causes, to resurrect.

### **Resumen**

Este artículo ofrece unas consideraciones generales sobre la muerte de lenguas. El documento presenta inicialmente una definición de este interesante fenómeno; enseguida, da a conocer algunas de las formas de desaparición de lenguas; posteriormente, propone una información sobre unas causas de la muerte lingüística; más adelante, muestra unos aspectos generales sobre lenguas en peligro de extinción, y sobre la resurrección de las lenguas. El artículo se cierra con unas ideas generales -a manera de conclusión-sobre la temática abordada.

**Palabras clave:** Sociología del lenguaje, muerte de lenguas, causas, extinción, resucitar.

*Estas modestas líneas están dedicadas a: Sadday, Miryam, Joseph; a mis Padres y Hermanos.*

*La expresión “muerte de una lengua” suena tan rotunda e inapelable como cualquier otra donde esa palabra haga su indeseable aparición, y sus ecos e implicaciones son similares. Decir de una lengua que ha muerto es como decirlo de una persona. No podría ser de otra forma, porque las lenguas no existen sin las personas”.*

David Crystal (2001, p. 13).

## Introducción

En primera instancia es de anotar cómo la sociología del lenguaje\*, en el estudio de la importante relación lenguaje-sociedad, le da más énfasis, según algunos estudiosos –como, por ejemplo Joshua Aaron Fishman– al componente social que al puramente lingüístico; al respecto, son pertinentes las siguientes palabras:

La relación entre lengua y sociedad nos lleva a dos puertos: el de la sociolingüística propiamente dicha y el de la sociología del lenguaje.

El objeto de estudio de la sociolingüística es la lengua como sistema de signos, pero considerada dentro de un contexto social. Al sociolingüista le interesan las relaciones entre los estratos sociales y la estructura lingüística; al sociólogo del lenguaje le preocupan aspectos

como el plurilingüismo, la diglosia, la planificación lingüística, las lealtades lingüísticas. Sirva el nombre de Joshua Fishman ([...] 1.972) (Moreno Fernández, 2005, pp. 290-292)

Otros aspectos estudiados dentro del amplio campo de estudio de la sociología del lenguaje –siguiendo, una vez más, al estudioso español (2005)– pueden ser los relacionados con: el bilingüismo, la elección, mantenimiento, sustitución de lenguas, lenguas en contacto, lenguas pidgin, lenguas criollas y mezcla de lenguas.

A más de lo anterior, uno de los aspectos de interés para la sociología del lenguaje lo constituye el relacionado con la muerte de las lenguas. En las siguientes líneas, se pretende dar a conocer, de manera global y sucinta, una visión general respecto de qué es la muerte de las lenguas, cuáles son algunas de sus formas, cuáles son algunas de sus causas; además, se menciona varias

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\* Se debe aclarar que para autores, como López Morales (2004, p. 38) “las distinciones entre sociolingüística y sociología del lenguaje han sido muy discutidas. Las posturas están aquí encontradas: las más extremas las ven, de una parte, como disciplinas totalmente diferenciadas, y, por otra, como exactamente la misma. Hay una gama de posiciones intermedias, algunas conciliadoras -las que proponen que son dos caras de la misma moneda-, y no faltan los defensores de la interdisciplinariedad”.

de las lenguas en peligro de extinción y, finalmente, se hace referencia al fenómeno de la resurrección de las lenguas.

## 1 La muerte de las lenguas

### 1.1 De la definición

En primer lugar, se da a conocer un acercamiento a la definición de este interesante y, a la vez, triste fenómeno. En general, estudiosos de la muerte de las lenguas la definen desde, principalmente, dos hechos: cuando no existen hablantes de una lengua, o cuando una determinada lengua ya no se habla en un espacio, área, región o territorio. En relación con el primer hecho, para David Crystal, (2001) “una lengua muere cuando no queda nadie que la hable” (p.13).

Los dos hechos antes mencionados no han estado exentos de discusión; es así como, siguiendo a Blas Arroyo (2008) para algunos estudiosos la muerte de lenguas tiene que ver con la situación sociolingüística cuando una lengua desaparece en una comunidad de habla particular, aunque en otras regiones se siga usando; para otros, una lengua muere cuando muere su último hablante. La primera concepción, teniendo en cuenta el mundo hispánico, se podría presentar en el español de Filipinas en donde se ha venido dando el cambio del idioma español por el idioma inglés; sin embargo, la lengua de cervantes se sigue usando en muchos otros países. La segunda visión se estaría dando en no pocas lenguas indígenas de Centroamérica

en donde la muerte de la lengua está unida a la muerte de su, cada vez más, reducida población. La tercera, se presenta, por ejemplo, en el caso de la lengua Córnica\*: La última hablante de esta lengua, Dorothy Pentreath, murió en 1.777.

De otra parte, de acuerdo con lo expuesto por Bernárdez (2004), la muerte de lenguas -o desaparición, de una lengua, como la denomina este autor- se puede entender de dos maneras: la primera, cuando la lengua desaparece para siempre, y, la segunda, cuando se da “la desaparición aparente debida al cambio”. En el primer caso, a manera de ejemplo, se puede citar como lenguas que ya no existen: El ibérico (lengua que se habló en España), el hitita (lengua indoeuropea hablada hace tiempo en Oriente Medio), el chumash (lengua india de los Estados Unidos, extinta en 1.965), el Dálmata o dalmático (lengua romance, hablada hasta el siglo XIX a lo largo de las costas de Dalmacia y en una pequeña parte de Albania), el pochuteco, lengua de la familia uto-azteca, del grupo nahua; esta lengua se habló alrededor de la ciudad de Pochutla en la costa pacífica de Oaxaca, en México; en Colombia, el muzo, el tairona, y el chibcha o muisca (lengua que se habló en Colombia, principalmente en los territorios de Bogotá, Tunja y Santander, posiblemente desaparecida desde fines del siglo XVIII).

Respecto de la segunda manera de muerte o desaparición lingüística, siguiendo a Bernárdez, la lengua no muere exactamente, sino que se transforma. Este

\* Lengua Córnica (El córnico o cornuallés) es una lengua celta britónica, lengua celta, hablada en el condado británico de Cornualles (en inglés Cornwall, en córnico Kernow), pequeña península situada en el extremo occidental de Gran Bretaña. El idioma córnico tiene un 80% de semejanza con el bretón y un 75% con el galés, hablado en la misma isla.

autor cita como ejemplo lo sucedido con el latín “[la lengua del imperio romano] desapareció pero aquí está la familia, que goza de muy buena salud [...] el castellano, el catalán o el rumano son latín transformado [...] El latín, el griego, el sánscrito o el antiguo nórdico no han llegado a desaparecer nunca, simplemente han ido cambiando hasta que en determinado momento se les tuvo que llamar otra cosa.” (p. 116)

Aunque se pueda pensar -erróneamente- que este fenómeno, rara vez, se presenta, es muy dicente, sorprendente y -por qué no- preocupante, la afirmación de Michael Krauss, -citado por Crystal (2001)- en el sentido de que hace 10. 000 años pudieron existir entre 5.000 y 20.000 lenguas. Los cálculos actuales se acercan a las 6.000 lenguas en el planeta, con una posible tasa de desaparición de una lengua cada dos semanas.

## 1.2 De unas formas de desaparición de las lenguas

Una lengua puede desaparecer de diversas maneras. Hagège (2002) plantea tres maneras, a saber: Transformación, Sustitución y Extinción. Enseguida, se da una sucinta información sobre cada una de estas:

[1] **Transformación** (una lengua cambia tanto que provoca el surgimiento de una nueva).

[2] **Sustitución** (luego de un período de convivencia entre las lenguas, se produce su fusión y, en el peor de los casos, el remplazo de una a favor de la otra).

[3] **Extinción** [esta se puede presentar en:]

-**Preacarización** (cuando la lengua deja de transmitirse a los hijos/niños del grupo).

-**Obsolescencia** (cuando la lengua empieza a caer en desuso, pierde contextos de acción y la influencia de la otra comienza a hacerse evidente).

-**Erosión** (implica la alteración del núcleo duro de la lengua conformado por su fonología, morfología y gramática en general).

-**Fosilización** (proceso por el cual una lengua se relega al ámbito ritual/religioso [Landaburu]). (Citado y expuesto por Romero Cruz, 2012).

## 1.3 De algunas causas de la muerte de las lenguas

No existe una única y contundente causa que explique la muerte de las lenguas, puesto que este es un fenómeno complejo con diversos factores implicados. Empero, a continuación, se presentan algunas posibles causas por las cuales, según unos investigadores en este campo, mueren las lenguas.

En primer lugar, Seifart (2.000) -citado por Romero Cruz (2012)- “Las lenguas no mueren por ninguna debilidad inherente”. Por otra parte, para Crystal (2001) hay dos grandes factores que pueden incidir en este fenómeno: en primer lugar, por *Factores que representan un riesgo para la seguridad física de las personas*. Dentro de estos factores, el autor citado hace referencia al hecho de que “una lengua muere, si mueren todas las personas que la hablan, por lo que cualquier circunstancia que constituya una

amenaza directa o inmediata a la seguridad física de parte o de toda la comunidad es, de alguna forma, la máxima amenaza. Muchas lenguas están en peligro o moribundas o extinguidas a causa de factores que han tenido un efecto drástico sobre el bienestar físico de sus hablantes” (Crystal, 2001, p.85, 86). Dentro de tales factores, según el académico de Irlanda del Norte, están: las catástrofes naturales; el hábitat puede convertirse en inhabitable (debido a una funesta combinación entre condiciones climáticas y económicas nada favorables. Dentro de tal combinación, las principales son: la hambruna y la sequía); por enfermedades, (como, por ejemplo: la peste, las gripes, el sida, la tuberculosis); por la situación política (guerras civiles, conflictos a escala internacional, conflictos étnicos y religiosos; una amalgama -difícil de separar- entre factores políticos y económicos, como sucede en Colombia). En cuanto esto último, como es sabido, nuestro país infortunadamente, ha sido escenario de un conflicto militar (fuerzas de ultraderecha, las fuerzas militares y las guerrillas se disputan el territorio nacional); este conflicto ha sido una de las causas de que -de acuerdo con Crystal- por lo menos, una treintena de lenguas indígenas hayan sido exterminadas.

Otra situación relacionada con la muerte de las lenguas, en nuestro querido país, tiene su origen en la despiadada e inmisericorde explotación de pequeñas comunidades por organizaciones internas nacionales así como extranjeras; en tan dolorosa situación -como si fuera poco- se dan condiciones de esclavitud laboral (por ejemplo, en la producción de goma [caucho] a lo largo del río Amazonas; recuérdese, aquí, por ejemplo,

las situaciones planteadas en la obra *la Vorágine*, del escritor de Neiva, José Eustasio Rivera), y en las migraciones, generalmente de población campesina o indígena, desde las zonas rurales hacia las ciudades. Lamentablemente, el resultado de estos hechos es la mortandad y la desintegración, en corto tiempo, de la comunidad.

Respecto de las lenguas indígenas que han desaparecido desde la llegada de los españoles, es de comentar que se presentó una mixtura de hechos:

...encuentros militares, lucha desigual entre aborígenes y conquistadores, imposición de un nuevo orden de cosas desfavorable a los vencidos, lengua y cultura indígenas postergadas, empobrecimiento demográfico nativo, imposición del régimen sociocultural español, intenso mestizaje. Todos estos hechos solo podían conducir a un resultado: índices cada vez más crecientes de mortandad de las lenguas indígenas, e imposición del español, previo estadio intermedio de bilingüismo [...]

Son muchas las causas que han producido estos procesos de mortandad lingüística [...] habrá que destacar un amplio conjunto, que va desde los encuentros bélicos -incluidos los tribales- hasta los sacrificios humanos y la antropofagia de algunas de estas culturas, más las prácticas abortivas y la mortandad infantil [...]. (López Morales, 2010, pp. 133; 142, 143).

En cuanto el segundo grupo de factores, considerados por Crystal (2001); están los

asociados con *factores que cambian la cultura de un pueblo*. Dentro de estos, el estudioso de Lisburn expone lo concerniente a la *asimilación cultural*; esta que se relaciona el fenómeno en el cual una cultura dominante influye sobre otra de tal manera que la cultura influida pierde su carácter debido a que sus miembros cambian de conducta y adoptan costumbres de la “cultura invasora”.

Esto puede ser el resultado de, por ejemplo, una inundación demográfica -un amplio grupo de individuos perteneciente a la cultura dominante invade el territorio de una determinada comunidad: Australia y Norteamérica, en la historia colonial, son ejemplos clásicos de ello. De otro lado, una cultura puede ejercer su dominancia sobre otra usando su superioridad militar y/o económica; esta situación se puede estar presentando, ya sea de manera directa o soterrada, en muchos países, debido a la influencia y/o dominancia de la cultura gringa.

Complementario a lo anterior, se pueden citar otros factores que inciden en el proceso de extinción lingüística, como: a) *el poco poderío* (social, económico) del grupo hablante de la lengua minoritaria; cuando un grupo social (país, población, comunidad, etc.) es débil ya sea política, social o económicamente, tal grupo está en peligro de que su lengua sea “absorbida”, asimilada por la lengua de grupo social con mayor poderío socioeconómico; b) *la*

*estigmatización de la lengua minoritaria*, es muy probable que los integrantes del grupo social “débil” empiecen a menospreciar su lengua y su cultura; por ejemplo, los hablantes ven en su “lengua débil” un medio de comunicación que pierde importancia frente a la lengua de “mayor poderío”. Este fenómeno, infortunadamente, se está observando, por ejemplo, en el palenque de San Basilio\*, en donde muchos nativos tienen una actitud displicente y de alejamiento hacia su lengua: el palenquero\*\* (cfr. Areiza (2004); ellos le están dando un mayor interés al español. Complementario a esto, se puede mencionar el hecho de que numerosos indígenas dan una escasa valoración a su lengua nativa; sobre esta situación, en cuanto la situación de lenguas indígenas en Hispanoamérica, es de anotar como:

...hay otros peligros que conspiran con igual o mayor tenacidad contra la supervivencia de muchas de estas lenguas. El mayor y más importante de ellos es la poca estima que muchos hablantes sienten por su lengua nativa. Decepcionados ante lo poco que se puede lograr con ella en las macroestructuras sociales hispánicas en las que está inmersa, terminan por no querer enseñar su idioma aborigen a sus propios hijos. Es una actitud de rechazo que suele estar acompañada de valoraciones muy positivas hacia la lengua y la cultura dominantes (López Morales, 2010, p. 143).

\* San Basilio de Palenque –“también conocido como: (1) El Palenque de San Basilio, (2) San Basilio de Palenque y, en sus primeros tiempos, (3) Palenque de San Miguel Arcángel” (Maglia, 2012, p. 23) está localizado en los Montes de María, cerca de Cartagena de Indias, en el departamento de Bolívar, República de Colombia.

\*\* Lengua criolla de los nativos de San Basilio de Palenque; esta lengua tiene su origen “en las etnias africanas traídas al puerto negrero de Cartagena de Indias, como mano de obra para las posesiones españolas en América” (Areiza, 2004, p. 135).

y c) *la pobreza extrema*. Esta es un factor que influye, de forma implacable, en la extinción de las lenguas.

Otra de las causas de la muerte de una lengua puede ser la sustitución de una lengua por otra; precisamente, para algunos autores como Dressler y Wodak, 1977; Andersen, 1982 [...] -citados por Moreno Fernández, (2005, pp. 246-247)- la muerte de una lengua ocurre cuando una determinada comunidad sustituye su lengua por otra diferente, en la mayoría de las ocasiones, luego de haber sufrido un penoso proceso de deterioro, de empobrecimiento. La sustitución lingüística pudo haber ocurrido porque –de acuerdo con la investigadora colombiana, Isabel Victoria Romero Cruz (2012)– “la lengua ha dejado de cumplir sus funciones y ha visto reducidos sus ámbitos de uso en tal magnitud, que no representa ninguna ventaja para quienes solían hablarla”.

El proceso de sustitución inicia, generalmente, con el contacto de lenguas; al establecerse el contacto, muy seguramente, vendrán, sobre la lengua dominada, cambios estructurales y funcionales para poder expresar requerimientos de la comunidad, usando formas lingüísticas características de la lengua dominante.

En el contacto de lenguas aparecen fenómenos como el de la interferencia de una lengua sobre la otra. Así, surgen los préstamos –en su mayoría– de la lengua dominante a la lengua dominada. Sobre este hecho, es de mencionar:

[Hay situaciones en que las transferencias son empobrecedoras]

cuando se trata de préstamos de la lengua dominante que vienen a sustituir unidades propias de la lengua receptora. Si estos préstamos son muy abundantes y si, además, se usan como palabras cita, es decir, con poca o ninguna adaptación fonológica o morfológica, puede pensarse en un proceso de transplante léxico, típico de ciertos estados de decadencia [...]. Si a esto se añade el préstamo de sufijos y la sustitución de los autóctonos hasta el punto de que estos dejan de funcionar, el estado es más grave; el dyirbal, una lengua australiana en proceso de extinción, ha reemplazado ya sus construcciones ergativas por reglas de ordenamiento de palabras, como en inglés [...] (López Morales, 2004, p. 253).

#### 1.4 Lenguas en peligro de extinción

El proceso de la muerte de una lengua no se da manera inmediata; no es un suceso instantáneo, en relación con este hecho Moreno Fernández (2005) comenta “el deterioro lingüístico y sociolingüístico de una lengua es un proceso largo y penoso que no culmina en muerte con facilidad porque no es sencillo hacer desaparecer una lengua cuando hay alguien que la quiere hablar” (p. 247).

Algunas lenguas antes de morir, “agonizan”; puede afirmarse que varias lenguas del mundo se encuentran en estado terminal, siguiendo a Bernárdez (2004), es de anotar cómo cerca de un 25% de las lenguas indígenas de Latinoamérica se hallan en “cuidados intensivos”; es decir, en peligro de extinción inmediata. Esto se debe, en su

mayoría, a que el número de hablantes de tales lenguas es muy reducido. De igual forma, es alarmante el estado de muchas lenguas aborígenes en Australia; un alto porcentaje de estas desaparecerá en poco tiempo. De manera similar ocurrirá con, por lo menos, la mitad de las lenguas del territorio de la que se denominaba antiguamente como unión soviética. Al respecto, Bernárdez comenta “aunque la mayor parte de los casos se trata de lenguas de diminutos grupos étnicos de Siberia [...]. Los 100 hablantes de aleutiano [véase *notas complementarias* 1] son en su mayor parte ancianos [... y] los ket [véase *notas complementarias*, 2] [que] son solo 1.200 [...]” (pp.113, 114).

Respecto de las lenguas indígenas vivas en la actualidad en Hispanoamérica, se puede comentar que, siguiendo a López Morales (2010), son 271; sobre la situación de tales lenguas, este autor presenta unas cifras y porcentajes alarmantes; entre las cuales es de mencionar: “las lenguas vigentes son 4 (1.5%), las resistentes, 22 (8,1%), las declinantes, 54 (19,9%) y las obsoletas 191 (70,4%).” (p. 142). Esto indica que un alto porcentaje de las lenguas indígenas de Hispanoamérica, morirá dentro de muy poco tiempo.

En Centroamérica, lenguas indígenas, como: paya, jicaque, sumu, gustuso, cabécar, bribri, buglé, teribe, emberá, se encuentran –según el académico cubano (2010, p. 146)– en estado de declinación; así mismo, lenguas como: lenca, rama, térraba, y boruca, se hallan en estado de extinción.

Infelizmente, Colombia no es la excepción en lo que a lenguas indígenas en peligro de extinción se refiere. En nuestro país, existe un buen número de lenguas al borde de la muerte; en este sentido, respecto de la situación de las lenguas nativas de la amazonia colombiana, Romero Cruz (2012), afirma:

como mencionan Aguirre y Reinoso (Aguirre & Reinoso, 2006), la amazonía colombiana cuenta con unas 37 lenguas habladas en su territorio, sin embargo, 32 de ellas tienen menos de 1000 hablantes, por lo cual podríamos clasificar a esta inmensa mayoría como *lenguas en peligro*, a partir de Landaburu (1996) [...] La lengua nonuya [perteneciente a la familia lingüística uitoto] está en peligro crítico de extinción, según la UNESCO [...] El tinigua [Lengua independiente\*] es, muy probablemente, una lengua si no extinta, en proceso de serlo, porque tan solo quedaba un hablante que además estaba ubicado en la Sierra de la Macarena, una región azotada por enfrentamientos bélicos propios del conflicto armado.

En cuanto este interesante tema, cabe la pregunta ¿Cómo puede estudiarse una lengua muerta?, una respuesta a este interrogante, teniendo en cuenta el contexto de las lenguas indígenas americanas, puede ser la siguiente –de acuerdo con González de Pérez (2011)–: en primera instancia, el investigador necesita servirse de textos escritos; para lo cual debe

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\* De acuerdo con la investigadora colombiana Isabel Victoria Romero Cruz (2012), las siguientes lenguas: yagua, andoque, cofán, ticuna y tinigua “se clasifican como [lenguas independientes] debido a que sus características morfológicas son muy particulares y diferentes de las demás familias establecidas.”



disponer, en lo posible, de documentos que nos hablen de la lengua indígena objeto de estudio, y, además, nos la ejemplifiquen.

En el caso de las lenguas ágrafas –situación de muchas de las lenguas indígenas de Colombia– si se dejan de hablar, se olvidarán para siempre, ya que no existe registro gráfico de estas. Sobre este hecho, la estudiosa colombiana anota: “Por esta razón, adquieren gran importancia los documentos coloniales que aún se conservan sobre ciertas lenguas indígenas desaparecidas y urge describir las lenguas que se hablan en el presente” (p. 123).

A más de lo anterior, al estudiar una lengua muerta se debe hacer uso del conocimiento que se posea sobre las lenguas vivas pertenecientes a la misma familia lingüística de la lengua estudiada; así mismo, se debe recurrir a documentos extralingüísticos los cuales puedan aportar información importante, y se debe tener en cuenta el español hablado en la región en donde se habló la lengua objeto de análisis puesto que, generalmente, quedan huellas de las lenguas muertas en ciertas estructuras del español usado en la región. De esta manera, teniendo presente varias fuentes, el investigador puede formular explicaciones e interpretaciones sobre las lenguas desaparecidas.

### 1.5 La resurrección de las lenguas

Así como puede darse el fenómeno de la muerte, extinción o desaparición de una lengua, también puede darse el de su resurrección. Este fenómeno se da cuando una lengua que dejó de ser hablada, puede revitalizarse para volver a ser usada. Para

adelantar la revitalización de una lengua es necesario llevar a cabo un proceso juicioso de planificación y política lingüística. Complementario a esto, es pertinente, además, siguiendo a Bernárdez (2004), “introducir su enseñanza en la escuela de todos los niveles como asignatura fundamental; hay que establecer incentivos para que la gente la use en todas las circunstancias posibles [...] Es necesario también promover el uso en los medios de comunicación...” (p. 117).

Una de las lenguas que “resurgió de sus cenizas” es la lengua hebrea. A más de esto, se puede citar el proceso de revitalización de la lengua cónica; proceso que ha sido impulsado por algunos movimientos de personas quienes desean revivir su uso; también se han hecho esfuerzos por recuperar lenguas como el gaélico escocés y el neonoruego (nynorsk). Otra lengua que se pretende resucitar es la Wampanoag. El pueblo que hablaba esta lengua fue, en un alto porcentaje, asesinado, expulsado de su territorio, o vendido como esclavo a otros pueblos; sobre esta lengua, es de anotar:

...esta es una de las lenguas más importantes de la Nueva Inglaterra anterior a la conquista. [...] El último hablante conocido murió hace un siglo. [Kenneth Hale] y algunos de sus alumnos consiguieron reconstruir el lenguaje por medio de pruebas textuales comparativas.

El principal colaborador de Hale fue una mujer Wampanoag, Jesse Little Doe, que le ayudó a reconstruir el idioma y luego lo aprendió. En lo que fue un momento de honor de Hale, le rindió un homenaje hablando con fluidez en

Wampanoag; además llevó con ella a su hija de dos años, el primer hablante nativo que tenía la lengua en un siglo. (Chomsky, 2010, p.16).

## A manera de conclusión

La muerte de las lenguas es un fenómeno de interés, principalmente, en el campo de estudio de la sociología del lenguaje. Al desaparecer una lengua, no solo se pierde el sistema lingüístico, sino, además, todo lo referente a la cultura, la cosmovisión, la conceptualización, las redes sociales que se podían establecer gracias a una lengua. La muerte de las lenguas es un hecho –si bien lamentable– que se presenta dentro de la dinámica de la articulación existente entre la relación hablante-lenguaje-sociedad.

Es interesante observar cómo en la muerte de las lenguas están imbricados e implicados una amalgama de diversos factores, como, por ejemplo, los relacionados con hechos o situaciones puramente geográficas, o con situaciones de orden social, cultural, político, religioso. En contraste con el hecho de que muchas lenguas –primordialmente, indígenas– se están extinguiendo o están en peligro de muerte, también se da el fenómeno de la resurrección de algunas: la otra cara de este hecho social y lingüístico. En el proceso de revitalización de una lengua también confluyen e influyen diversos aspectos, especialmente, intereses sociales, políticos y económicos.

Finalmente, es de comentar cómo la muerte de lenguas indígenas se presenta en diversas latitudes del mundo y va en

aumento día a día. De otra parte, llama la atención que el proceso de resurrección de lenguas es muy reducido, más aún, si se compara con el de la muerte lingüística.

## Notas complementarias

**1. El aleutiano:** Lengua de la familia esquimo-aleutiana (familia conformada por lenguas nativas de Groenlandia, el Ártico canadiense, Alaska y partes de Siberia). El aleutiano es la lengua del pueblo aleutiano, dicho pueblo vive, principalmente, en las *Aleutianas* (archipiélago de por lo menos 3000 islas volcánicas; este arco de islas va del sudoeste de Alaska (Estados Unidos) hasta la península de Kamchatka (Rusia). Las islas Aleutianas están localizadas entre el mar de Bering, al norte, y el océano Pacífico septentrional, al sur.

**2. Los ket, keti, quetos u ostíacos:** Se denomina, así, a un pueblo que habita en el valle medio del río Yenisei (considerado el más importante de Siberia -Rusia- y uno de los mayores de Asia). El término *Ket* quiere decir “hombre”. Los *Keti* Hablan una lengua paleosiberiana. (En lingüística, paleosiberiano o paleoasiático [“(Del gr. ὄαἰἰἰἰἰἰἰἰ, antiguo). elem. compos. Significa en general ‘antiguo’ o ‘primitivo’, referido frecuentemente a eras geológicas anteriores a la actual. *Paleocristiano, paleolítico*” *DRAE (2001)*,] [este] es un término usado [...] para nombrar un conjunto dispar de lenguas habladas en regiones remotas de Siberia. Lo único que tienen estas lenguas en común [es] la suposición de que antedatan a otras lenguas dominantes en la zona, sobre todo las lenguas tungús y las túrquicas; que a su vez han sido desplazadas por el idioma

ruso.)” ([http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas\\_paleosiberianas](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas_paleosiberianas)).

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## Abstracts of on-going Thesis Documents 11<sup>TH</sup> Cohort

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:

#### CONSTRUCTING THEMSELVES AS AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS

*Leidy Marcela Chacon Vargas*

##### Abstract

This research proposal is being developed in a private university with a group of ten students of fourth semester. This team belongs to the Psychology and Environmental Engineering Programs. The main objective of this study is to analyze and interpret undergraduate students' self-construction as autonomous learners when reconstructing meaningful learning experiences. The type of study is framed under the qualitative paradigm and the interpretative approach. The instruments used to get the data are students' introspective diaries and semi structured interviews. Additionally the unit of analysis is the students' reconstruction of meaningful learning experiences. Finally, the upcoming results attempt to answer the following research question: How do undergraduate students construct themselves as autonomous learners when reconstructing meaningful learning experiences?

#### TRANSFORMING MY KNOWLEDGE THROUGH MY PARTNERS' EXPERIENCE

*Viviana Mesa Solano*

##### Abstract

This study focuses on researching through an interpretative study, how sixth graders at a Private Bilingual Institution, as the participants in this research, co-construct meanings through controversial issues in argumentative debates. The objectives are to analyze and to interpret students' opinions to identify different ways to co-construct meanings in discussions, using English as a real foreign language. The research instruments are video-recordings and a

semi structured interview. The preliminary finding indicates that the transformations of ideas are influenced by peers who share experiences and socially construct and negotiate ideas to put in practice their ability to convince others, to express critical ideas and to justify their reasons. Therefore, the action of creating meaning comes from daily practices taken real social issues than to promote learning changes or modifications.

### **STUDENTS AS AUTHORS OF THEIR OWN LIFE TEXTS: A NARRATIVE STUDY IN LITERATURE CIRCLES**

*Luz Helena Prada Ramírez*

#### **Abstract**

This research proposal is being developed in a private university with a group of fourteen students of third semester. This team belongs to the Economy program. The main objective of this study is to analyze and interpret upon the students' narratives by reconstructing life experiences when enrolled in literature circles. The type of study is framed under the qualitative paradigm and the interpretative approach. The instruments used to get the data are students' narratives and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the unit of analysis is what the participants revealed in their narratives about themselves as authors of their own life texts. Finally the upcoming results attempt to answer the following research question: What do students' narratives reveal about themselves as authors of their own life texts through literature circles?

### **LINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF MUISCAS GROUP TOWARDS SPANISH LANGUAGE**

*María Angélica Murcia Sarmiento*

#### **Abstract**

This research study aims at interacting with three members of the Muiscas' cabildo in Suba Bogotá in order to understand how their linguistic identity is presented when they are involved in the occidental community and need to speak Spanish language. This research study is framed under the Qualitative paradigm in which the unit of analysis is determined by Muiscas' perceptions towards Spanish. Data gathering is mainly analyzed from oral life stories and interviews which basically approached them in two main issues: the academic and social contexts. Data was illuminated with some theoretical constructs related to language and identity, majority languages versus minority languages, language planning, education for minorities, language revitalization, identity self-construction and language status.

## Intermediate II Students' Essays: A First Attempt towards Academic Writing

Intermediate II Students' Essays: A First Attempt towards Academic Writing. It is well known that writing in a language that is not your native language is a complete challenge. Tang (2012, p. 2) argues that "Constructing academic essays, dissertations and research articles in this second or foreign language is even more challenging". Considering the previous facts and the mission of the Foreign Languages Program at UPTC, in relation to the importance of guiding students to be.

researchers who share their knowledge in the English area, the English Intermediate II course, led by Bertha Ramos Holguín, aimed at helping students start writing academic papers. Then, what the reader will find in the following lines is an account of the first attempts Intermediate II students achieved after being guided on how to write academically.

### **GENDER AND CAREER CHOICE: IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP?**

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Gender stereotypes may influence the choice of a career. Sociobiology studies (Frederikse, Aylward, & Pearlson, 1999) have proved that there are differences in the male and female brains.

Due to these differences, women would rather study some specific careers while men prefer choosing other ones. For example, Modern languages students of Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia are mostly women. It might be due to the fact that women are more talkative than men. However, it does not mean that a man cannot study a stereotyped career for women or vice-versa. Gender influences only in how someone can do something easier based on his/her brain's abilities.

The different cerebrum's characteristics are related to gender. Wilson (1992), sustains male's brain has more gray matter than female one. This matter, called thinking matter; specifically activates regions of male's brain like left parietal

lobe (mathematic calculations), frontal lobe (strategies), motor cortex (movement), and hippocampus (geography). Moreover, Pearlson (1995) supports that female's brain contains more white matter than the male one, this matter is responsible for connecting both right and left hemispheres. The white matter helps the brain to send information and to more successfully stimulate some areas such as hippocampus (memory), amygdala (emotions), frontal lobe (planning), Broca and Wernicke's area (language). These are notable differences between both brains which can be reflected in the way someone learns. In terms of language acquisition and production, women are more talkative. According to Pearlson (1995) the female's brain has the Broca and Wernicke's area bigger than male one.

Kennison (2013) explains the Wernicke's area in charge of recognizing, analyzing, and interpreting the message by the auditory cortex; Broca's area is responsible for organizing and producing the message. Male brain displays lower language skills, however men also can learn a second language as well as women do, the difference may be focused on their different abilities to learn. For instance, the women's brain is more active at memorizing words, speaking, listening and reading comprehension; the man's brain works logically, thus he could easily and pragmatically learn some grammar structures, pronunciation, and exceptions in languages. These abilities may become decisive when choosing a career.

There are some differences when gender population choosing careers. For instance, nursing has been strictly considered as a career for women; and pilots' jobs are only for men. The reason for these preferences could be in the social gender stereotypes instead of brain's skills. One of the main stereotypes is that a girly girl should not be involved in dirty or strong jobs such as mechanics, drivers or engineering in general. But a normal woman does accomplish much better some soft or sweet employments such as nanny, nurse, hairdresser, psychologist, secretary or a teacher.

This is a similar situation when talking about men; they tend to perform high status professions according to the gender stereotypes. Beyond the simple critiques or judgments about the behavior of women and men, we can find the possible real reason for these professional choices in the brain. In that sense, the Modern Languages career could be influenced by those stereotypes.

Statistics established by Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia's Language School reveal that most of its students are women. The data shows up that 69.4% of students are women and 31.6% men. This is a suitable example to demonstrate the relationship between gender and the choice future profession. As explained before, the conditions of the brain supply more facilities concerning to language learning for women. They are more communicative, talkative and actively social. The men have the same skills but in a lower level and it would be the main reason for their absence in the Modern Language career.



To sum up, there are some differences in the brain according to gender. Men are logical and women are actively social. Female and male brain differences are not the only factor influencing the career choice but also gender stereotypes become a prominent reason to decide the appropriate profession. A woman can perform as a pilot, but this job might be harder for her. A man can perform this job easier because of his geographic location capability. Men can learn a new language but they would have some problems when performing, memorizing, and discussing. The success of language learning process does not depend on the learner gender but how someone strives to accomplish his/her goals.

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### **IN THE PATH OF A REFLECTIVE CURRICULUM**

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In the context of Colombian education, English curricula at schools are often designed in order to achieve required parameters demanded by educational authorities, and have set aside other important components involved in meaningful learning. The main goals of those parameters are related to getting excellent results in standardized tests, so the contents, materials, and learning experiences of those curricula are focused on grammar, translation, reading and writing. In that sense, cultural issues are often set aside.

Wiggins & Mc Tighe (2005) remark that a curriculum is more than a traditional program guide, therefore; beyond mapping out the topics and materials, it specifies the most appropriate experiences, assignments and assessments that might be used for achieving goals. In that sense, teachers have to be responsible of those goals, although they should reflect about the appropriateness of those curricula for their students. Those should provide opportunities to dialogue

between them and spaces to develop cultural awareness or a meaningful learning for themselves.

There are important goals to achieve but, if the students do not feel affiliation enough about a new knowledge, and teachers do not promote appropriate learning experiences, taking into account cultural issues, curricula might fail in terms of achieving an integral education process. It means that students do not enjoy their own process, do not feel motivated about neither learning about foreign cultures nor comparing it with their own culture, they do not make connections between that knowledge and real life, they do not see beyond themselves to make changes in their own life. Canagarajah (1999) cited by Choudhury (2008) remarks that just as the personal background of the learner influences how something is learned, what is learned shapes the person: our consciousness, identity, and relationships are implicated in the educational experience. In that sense, bear in mind what students have learned in their communities has a great incidence on how students learn, and simultaneously what they learned has a relevant impact on how they perceive themselves.

In order to design appropriate experiences, materials, assignments and assessments implies a dialogical position from the teachers with their students, whose cultural background is a meaningful factor that it is possible to take advantages, since it is easier to begin from familiar topics to those ones which have nothing to do with them. It could be a kind of negotiation between what they must learn and what they should learn. Although, it is well known that teachers have to face challenges like the previous curricula, the learning customs of the students, who are afraid of showing their own identity, of exploring different options because they have learned as oppressed people.

As Freire concerns,

“The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift, it must be persuaded constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an idea located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable for the quest for human completion.

It means it is a difficult task, which is developed during the lifetime. The opportunity to be successful in that process of reflection and emancipation and is not only an advantage in educational terms, but also in their own lives. That step could support the searching of a reflective curriculum connected with the real world of our students, human beings looking for better opportunities.

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## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIDEOGAMES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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Videogames use different language skills to communicate information related with the goals of it, two of those skills are: Reading and listening. It is very easy in today's videogames to have direct contact with foreign languages, as in Colombia the mother tongue is Spanish, then English is received as a second language. According to deHaan (2005), many videogames present extensive aural and textual information simultaneously. It means that the videogame player (student) is exposed to listen and read information in another language while he plays. The opportunity that the players have due to interactions and repetition in videogames is that they can know another language without obligation. Most of the time when videogames players play a game, they are listening and reading information in English related with the game.

Reading is an important part of videogames; most of the contents are presented by text, and in English. As the player has to read almost all the time, he can learn two things at the same time, vocabulary and reading comprehension. As videogames also offer the opportunity to listen while playing through dialogues between the characters of the game, the students enhance listening competence and their academic performance could be better.

Learning English could be more effective if teachers add this kind of tools and other technological systems in their classes. In the case of students of modern languages, due to students:

“As learners advance in their language study, they tend to learn new words not from formal introduction in textbooks but through reading or listening, deciphering unknown expressions through their contextual use, root meaning, structure, or similarity to known items, or by simply looking them up in a reference work” (Godwin-Jones, 2010).

Videogames can result a very useful way for teaching English because of their reading and listening contents. Therefore, teachers should include these instruments in their classes but, how to do it? Felicia (2009) recommends on his handbook for teachers "Videojuegos en el aula, manual para docentes", that: Before class, the teacher has to choose the videogame, then to identify the aims into the class, and gives the information related with the objectives of the class trough the videogame, to the students. During the class the teacher has to explain the objectives of the game and make a demonstration of the session of playing. Finally, after the game session, the teacher has to evaluate the topics and make reflexions about the videogame content.

In conclusion, students can receive information not only through textbooks but also through videogames. It is clear that nowadays teachers can access many tools to develop their classes, videogames could be an easy and fun way to teach languages, and arouses interest of students to study by themselves.

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### **ANOTHER LANGUAGE IN COLOMBIA**

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Whether bilingualism is possible or not in Colombia is still a conflict. Some people think that it is important to be bilingual or to speak more than three languages. The Colombian Government developed The National Bilingualism Proram (PNB) which wants all students to be bilingual before starting college. Some researchers think bilingualism in Colombia is not possible, because there is not enough time for achieving this goal.

To start, it is necessary to set the difference between bilingualism and bilingual, according to Baker (2001) bilingual is a person who knows about two languages

and bilingualism is conceived as the existence of two languages in a country. It means that bilingual is related to individual learning process of the different languages, and bilingualism is general, it is the whole concept. Based on Rojas (2008):

Bilingual refers to the ability of a person to use two languages in different contexts, to be able to establish communication, no matter if the person faces some minor lacks in the language to be managed. Therefore, once you can communicate with others in both languages you can consider yourself a bilingual.

For that reason, there will be bilingual people but not bilingualism. There are people who are competent in a language, but not all people are competent, if there are people that live in rural areas, they will not be a competent in 2019, taking into account that they have not had the same education that as in a private school, for example.

The government established that Colombian students will be bilingual by 2019. According to research papers, it will not be possible, based on the fact that it does not have the necessary conditions to achieve this goal. The basis of teacher plays a vital role in this process, but they do not know how they must follow it as the program is not designed for the Colombian context. Such as Romero (2009) sets:

To begin with the Ministry of Education's bilingual program, it is not appropriate for the Colombian context because it does not cover the teachers' and students' needs for teaching and learning a foreign language. Second, there is an imposition about how, what, to whom, and when to teach English. Consequently, English teachers must follow the Anglo-American English parameters, which include standardized tests, methodology and resources.

In that sense, Colombian people could accomplish foreign standards, and it is not adequate, because education standards, people, needs, resources and so on are different. Each country should have its own educational system which complies with the community's needs.

In the world, there are many advances that produce different changes in society. Due to constant change and advance of society, people in Colombia need to have the ability to communicate with other people from other culture. MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional) established that Colombian people must be competent in a foreign language by 2019; but, it is necessary to ask, what do they mean by people that are competent in a foreign language?

The National Government has the fundamental commitment to create the conditions for Colombians to develop communicative competences in another language. Having a good proficiency level in English facilitates the access to job

and education opportunities that help ensure quality of life. To be competent in another language is essential in a globalized world, which demands better communication, to open frontiers, to understand other contexts, to make knowledge your own and make it circulate, to understand and make yourself understood, to enrich your being and play a decisive role in the development of the country. Being bilingual broadens the opportunities to be more competent and competitive (translation of *Estándares Básicos en Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*. MEN, 2006, p. 3). Quoted by Sánchez, A & Obando, G (2008).

The previous quote gives, roughly, what is expected and why it is necessary to learn a foreign language, which is very sweet on the paper, it sounds very good, but, it will be possible in the time that MEN have established that this goal will be achieved. In so short time, it is impossible to think that it happens, despite of, such as mentioned MEN: there may be a demand by bilingual professionals by Colombian companies and international companies.

What is the method for having a meaningful learning and the Bilingualism program to be leaded successfully? According to Sánchez, A. & Obando, G. (2008) “The first step in ensuring effective foreign language programs in Colombia should be to inform everyone about not only the goals but also the rationale behind the goals for L2 teaching in this context”. In the first place, teachers must take into account to teach that it is not to teach grammar or communicative competence without any sense or without involving some context, because, when teachers teach something, they teach another culture and customs, stereotypes, implicit issues that help the learner have a better communication, she/he can understand any context or dialogue more easily.

On the other hand, it is fundamental to think about hours that people studied the English language to achieve the goal of Bilingualism program. Based on Lightbown & Spada (1999) one or two hours a week – even for seven or eight years – will not produce much progress for second language speakers. This ‘drip-feed’ approach often leads to frustration as learners feel that they have been studying ‘for years’ without making much progress. In this way, if MEN want to achieve the goal, one aspect to consider is the time intensity of English classes, because, this is not enough for everything that must be worked. For example, one private school of Medellin has a different model to teach all subjects, they suggest a model called: Self contain teachers, where such areas as Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics in English language are worked. They are studying 30 hours a week since students arrive at primary school, therefore, they can speak and communicate with others perfectly.

To achieve bilingualism in Colombia, it is necessary to reform certain statements; to foster communication environment, where people can develop their abilities about the English language, to increase time intensity. Teacher must be proficient in all levels of school, generally, primary teachers are people that is not capable

enough to teach a foreign language and teachers must exploit the neuronal development of children, whereby it can achieve a meaningful learning; but, if teachers are not trained to teach English specifically, children could lose the opportunity to have a better education about English language. To conclude, if MEN want to achieve Bilingualism in Colombia, they must worry since childhood with more than two or three hours per week of teaching of English Language to go slowly, from root, to achieve the target set.

The challenges on the issue of bilingualism in Colombia are enormous; the level of English of students is relatively low; thus evidenced by outcomes associated with its performance or test examinations. These results are consistent with Sánchez-Javva (2012) and MEN (2005), where are spared that a very small proportion of Colombian students can be classified as bilingual. For achieving a greater degree of bilingualism in Colombia, this program (PNB) is required to have a greater impact and reach, although it has met important efforts, progress on the subject of bilingualism has been limited, which is reflected in the performance of students in the English test.

Bilingualism in Colombia is not possible. The educational system does not give the necessary tools to achieve this aim in such a short time. In order to achieve for Colombia to have bilingualism, government must consider a new educational system built from Colombian context, according to Colombian people's needs.

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## THEATER AS A TOOL IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Theater has been the most important pedagogical tool in my life; furthermore it has been like a guide in my daily life because it has taught me to observe other people, to listen and to talk appropriately. Theater is an excellent tool for learning to write, read, speak and listen in the English language. I have worked with “complex” authors like Shakespeare and Williams and I have learned a lot about them and their native language in a significantly way.

Drama is regarded as a subject; however many people think it is an excellent pedagogical tool for teaching other curricular topics. In both cases we can say that we are talking about a form of aesthetic education and art. The drama might be considered as pedagogy itself, because, as pedagogy, drama is composed of a set of values, rules, principles, precepts, models and many theoretical and practical data whose goal is to guide the teacher’s interventions to improve the learning of all participants. The Art for that reason can be defined as pedagogy in the sense of educational method. (Laferriere, 2008)

Throughout time, theater has been used as a teaching tool in different fields of knowledge. In our case, as a language teachers, it is common to find projects that intertwine language and theater. In my own experience, I can say that when we prepared English performances, the participants of the performance learned a lot of about the language: vocabulary, sentences building, and expressions, in a significantly and fun way.

The theater is a tool that allows understanding the world by the experience of the other person, it allows “putting in the others shoes” and in the research field, there are some examples that show that the theater has been used as a very effective tool in the pedagogical aims. Medina & Campano (2006) consider the Drama as the unique art that provides an (inter)active context wherein participants can comprehend and stretch the limits of their day-to-day realities through the embodiment of critical reflection and both rehearsed and improvised action.

In the theatrical project by Ariza (2008) he evidenced that the theater is a real approach to English for students of performing arts who had never before spoken as such, stating that when someone represent another that he/she is not, he/she is him/herself but generated a distance put aside the embarrassment, main inhibitor of human actions and especially of those who should speak another language. But when the learners shift the attention from doing well or wrong to paying attention to the emotion that should be developed, which had achieved an emphasis on the interpretation, the technical language skills went into the background



On the other hand, the same author further asserts that meaningful repetition of sounds (words) allowed that the daily life of the students was linked. The theater little by little is a part of the student life, student days, and makes sense to them. English accompanied them throughout their training, offering the basic principles of a culture that felt far and why they feel admiration or disgust.

In conclusion, theater has been an excellent tool through time in order to learn a foreign language. Not only it uses another space out of the conventional English classroom, but also it helps to teach and understand how English works. In addition it is important to say that doing exercises of repetition, and by kinesthetic tools, language can be acquired step by step, not only for the evaluation, but also for the daily life. Taking into account that theater works with characters that have another point of view about life, it helps to improve and enrich the sense of life and it helps to understand the world in which we live.

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