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Editorial

Although the authors of the articles in this issue of Opening Writing Doors Journal have diverse backgrounds, there is a considerable overlap among them. Through research studies or reflective papers, either seasoned researchers or undergraduate student researchers aim to improve the quality of learning and teaching foreign languages.

This issue begins with Amaya Merchán and Vergel García's research-based paper focused on identifying the influence of an evaluative setting on the Foreign Languages (FL) oral production. The authors describe some factors and their impact on foreign language learners' oral production.

In "Language Learning Strategies and English Proficiency: Case study", Rios Villamizar, an undergraduate student at the University of Pamplona, aims to identify the most common language learning strategies English as a Foreign Language student's use.

Plested-Alvarez, Ramírez and Díaz's paper, an attempt to describe a virtual



knowledge network aimed at understanding new ways of generating, disseminating and transferring knowledge. This paper develops the concept on invisible school as the first step in the creation of a virtual university.

In the article «Le stage en FLE à l'Université de Pamplona », Martínez Cáceres analyzes how FL pre-service teachers take part in a training on reflection, a key component of their course of study. The author presents the structure and conceptual, linguistic and methodological challenges of this training program, along with an analysis of a data collected during student's first-teaching experience.

In the final article, “What I Have Learned about Collecting Data as an Undergraduate Researcher”, Jesús Cruz, a fifth year student at the B.A. in languages at the Universidad de Pamplona, reflects on the challenges, and learning experiences he went through while collecting data as undergraduate student researcher. He also presents a reflective account on the intricacies of interviewing participants for the first time, and his insights of taking part of a researcher team.

Hopefully, these articles will enlighten the path towards a better understanding of learning and teaching foreign languages.



Evaluative Setting and Oral Production

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the influence of an evaluative setting on the Foreign Languages (FL) oral production. It was hypothesized that the FL oral production of FL learners would increase being challenged in an evaluating setting. This last term is created based on authors that refer to the importance of the teaching, learning, and evaluative methods during the FL learning process (Krashen and Terrell, 1983; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Courtillon, 2003; Lozanov, 2005; Loewen, 2007; Clerc, 2010). The study describes the possible factors and elements that surround the evaluative process of the ability to communicate verbally in the target languages. A total of ten (10) learners were observed and interviewed in a mixed method research. The findings were analyzed taking into account interpretative techniques, recursive abstraction and coding procedures. It was found that students seem to respond to diverse personal needs increasing the FL oral communication when they are evaluated.



Additionally, the characteristics of the evaluative setting components may affect the results of the oral evaluations.

Key words: Evaluative setting, oral production, learner needs.

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio es identificar la influencia de un entorno de evaluación sobre la producción oral en una lengua extranjera (Foreign Language, FL). Se hipotetizó que la producción oral de los aprendices de una lengua extranjera aumentaría colocándolos en un entorno de evaluación. Este último término es creado basado en autores que se refieren a la importancia de los métodos de enseñanza, aprendizaje, y evaluación empleados durante el proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera (Krashen and Terrell, 1983; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Courtyllon, 2003; Lozanov, 2005; Loewen, 2007; Clerc, 2010). El estudio describe los posibles elementos que rodean el proceso de evaluación de la habilidad de comunicarse verbalmente en los idiomas meta. Se observaron y entrevistaron diez (10) aprendices en una investigación de métodos mixtos. Los resultados se analizaron teniendo en cuenta las técnicas de interpretación, abstracción recursiva y procedimientos de codificación. Se encontró que los estudiantes parecen responder a diversas necesidades personales que aumentan la comunicación oral en la lengua meta cuando son evaluados. Además, se halló que las características de los componentes del entorno de evaluación pueden afectar los resultados de las evaluaciones orales.

Palabras clave: Entorno evaluativo, producción oral, necesidades de los aprendices.



Introduction

It is certainly possible that speaking generates the most discussion and controversy in language teaching. McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 151) affirm that speaking is undervalued and taken for granted while; Ur (1996, p. 120) considers speaking is the most important skill to develop. Bearing this in mind, this paper analyses how an evaluative setting affects the oral production in a group of ten FL students at a public university in Colombia. The study applies a mixed method approach involving observations, field notes, a written demographical questionnaire and an interview. Although, there is an extensive amount of studies comprising the oral production definition, phases of development, components, and correct evaluation (Omaggio, 1986; The Council of Europe, 2001; Courtillon, 2003; Canagarajah 2006; Moreno, 2007), there are a few studies broaching the components forming the setting of an evaluative process and its influence on the evaluations. Due to the absence of studies focused on this topic, the researchers create the term evaluative setting and list its components. In this study, setting is understood as the whole teaching and learning environment (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). In this manner, the evaluative setting is formed by the evaluation, context and time, methods and resources and, pressure sensations. These terms are defined providing the theoretical framework of the study. The paper finishes presenting the conclusions and discussion analyzing the findings and providing some future research implications.



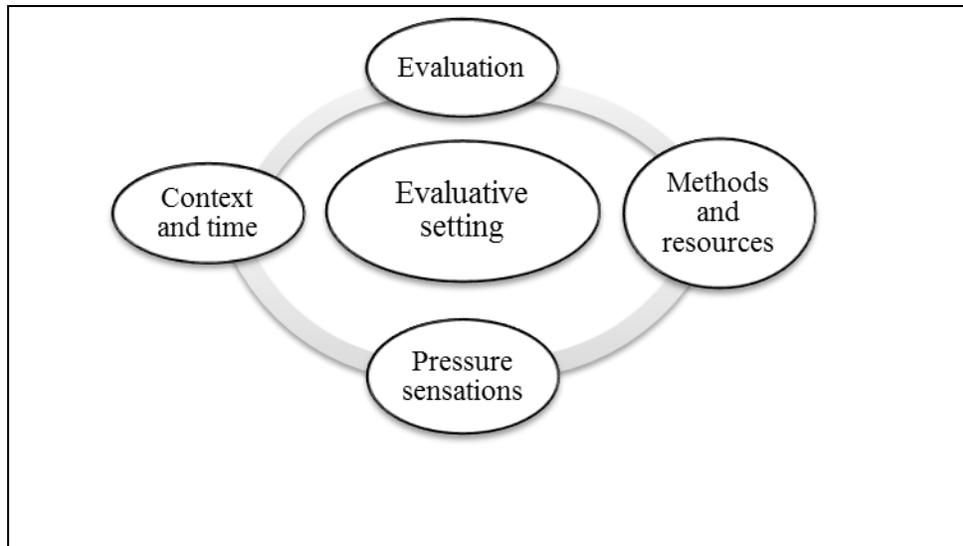
Literature review

Evaluative Setting

McDonough and Shaw (1993) states that setting includes the factors that determine whether the aims of a language program are feasible and realistic. They include the role of English in the country, the role of English in the school, the teachers, management and administration, resources available, support personnel, the number of pupils, time available for the program, physical environment, the socio-cultural environment and so on. The term evaluative setting is created to identify the components encircling an evaluative process and their influence on the FL oral production (see figure 1). It emerges when the students consciously know they are being evaluated, measured, tested, examined or assessed formally in their oral production. The evaluative setting is structured by four components. They are the evaluation, the context and time in which the evaluative process is developed, the methods and resources used by teachers during the evaluative process and, some



pressure sensations felt by students at the moment of the evaluation.



Clerc (2010) affirms that **evaluation** is a process of collecting and reviewing specific information that finishes with the assignation of a value. It has different purposes: (i) regulation of the learning process fixing goals and controlling progressions, (ii) categorization of students, (iii) changes in teaching and learning methodologies, (iiii) orientation of academic processes and, so on. Additionally, there are different categories of evaluations (diagnostic, formative and summative). They are appropriate to measure the ability to use the language effectively for specific purposes and functions inside specific communities (Canagarajah, 2006).

In this study, context refers to the physical space where the evaluation is applied. It

can be an authentic or a quasi-authentic place. The creation of a visually attractive environment for learners helps to motivate the apprenticeship (Lozanov, 2005). The Natural Teaching Approach attempts to immerse the student with the language s/he is learning by creating artificial spaces allowing an in-depth use of the language (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). These artificial spaces encourage the communication in real life contexts (Hymes, 1973). Time is considered as the moment in which the oral evaluation occurs or is perceived. It can be in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, or at night during a class, a tutoring, a spontaneous dialogue or a real oral evaluation.

The methods and resources refer to the procedures and elements selected by teachers to evaluate students. Interactive, collaborative and performative evaluations reveal the pragmatic language competence permitting to evaluate fluency, grammar and, phonetics because “it includes not only an acceptable pronunciation to communicate one’s words but also the discourse strategies to convey one’s ideas” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 239). Moreover, the oral production is evaluated individually when students are demanded to maintain monologues (Courtillon, 2003). Teachers can use Error Correction strategies when students or their pairs are not able to correct their mistakes (Walz, 1982; Lowen, 2007;) and techniques of suggestopedic instruction (rhythmic music, cultural resources, decoration elements, and breathing exercises) to reduce pressure and anxiety during the evaluations (Beitinger, Heinz & Renkl, 1993; Lozanov, 2005).



The pressure sensations comprise different perception students have when they are evaluated orally. These sensations are not only taken as threats because they can be notions to make the students to improve their oral practices and enlarge their vocabulary. They are divided into internal and external sensations. The internal ones refer to the pressure exerted by the learner him/herself to accomplish personal needs (achievement, power and affiliation). These needs are examined by McClelland (1958). In this study, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation features are considered as internal agents of pressure since they respond to the personal language needs of the students (Weiss, 1979 as cited in Bertocchini & Constanzo, 2007). The external sensations come from exterior agents as people who want students to achieve a determined goal, sicknesses, feelings of anxiety or fear, personal problems and, so on.

Oral Production

Oral production refers to the ability of communicating verbally, functionally and accurately in the target language (Omaggio, 1986). The speaking activities may include events as reading a text aloud, speeches at public meetings, monologues to describe something or to defend an idea, speaking spontaneously, singing, or commentaries about life details (Council of Europe, 2001). The Council of Europe (2001) presents the definition of spoken interaction as an activity in which “the language user acts alternately as speaker



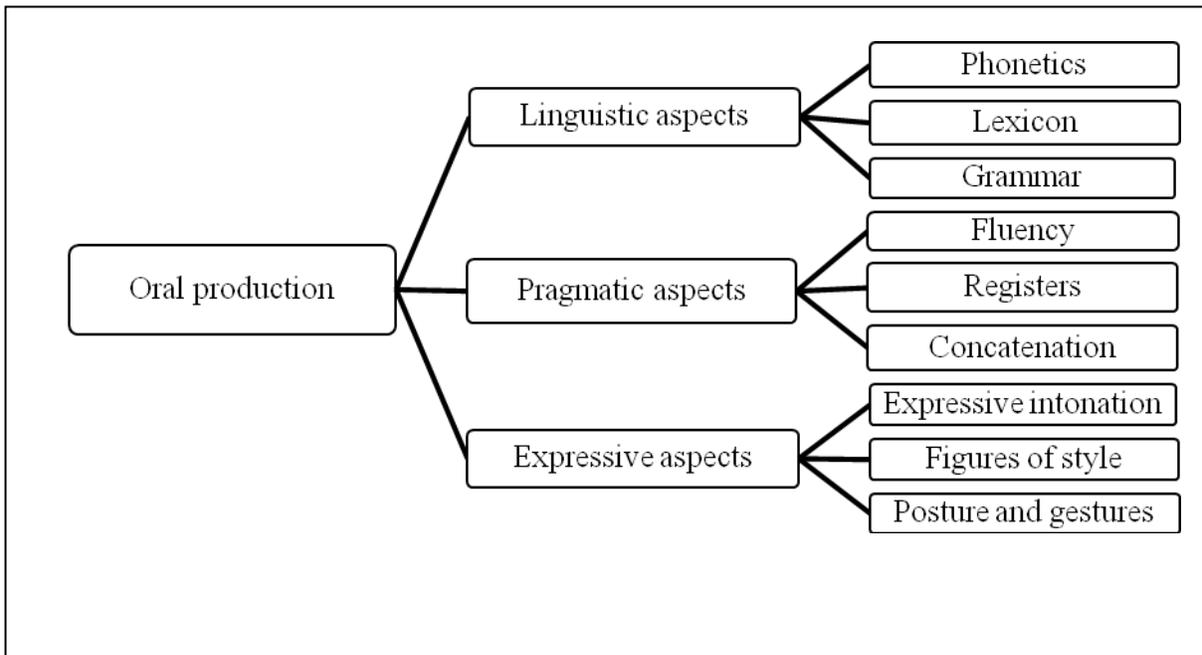
and listener with one or more interlocutors so as to construct conjointly, through the negotiation of meaning following the co-operative principle, conversational discourse” (p.73). Some examples of spoken interaction are casual conversations, formal and informal discussions, interviews and, debates. The oral expression is an observable skill related to the oral comprehension and it is unified to the affective part of the personality (Moreno, 2007). It means that the student can be influenced by the fear and/or nervousness to make a mistake and his/her oral production can decrease.

The language development phases have been described in different studies (Lambert, 1964; Moreno, 2007; Clerc, 2010). The oral production development advances in the same way the general knowledge about the FL increases (Moreno, 2007). Lambert (1964) establishes that the development of a new language starts with the acquisition of principles of phonetics and lexicon. After that, syntax is arisen. As a third stage emerges morphology. Finally, the socio-cultural rules are developed. Courtillon (2003) affirms that the acquisition of morphology is proportional to the language practices and the time employed studying the FL. Also, it is based on the language correction strategies provided by teachers and on the detection of mistakes in the speech of other students. The pragmatics aspects can be developed through the participation in role-plays and cultural encounters with native speakers of the target language.

Courtillon (2003) unifies the oral production components into linguistic, pragmatic and expressive aspects (See Figure 2). The linguistic ones



involve phonetics (pronunciation of phonemes and linguistic intonation), lexicon (vocabulary knowledge) and grammar (word order, verbal forms, used of prepositions, articles, etc.). The pragmatic properties measure the capacity of transmitting information in an adequate manner according to the context. These aspects take into account fluency (pronunciation of words without long and repetitive pauses in speech), registers (adoption of situations as neutral, familiar or distant) and concatenation (reformulation of questions and statements). The expressive qualities gathers together the expressive intonation (natural pauses and accents), use of figures of style (discourse emphasis) and posture and kinesics language (natural gestures to facilitate the transmission or perception of the message). The expressive aspects are relevant taking into account that he great part of communication comes through non-verbal communication (Mehrabian, 1972).



Canagarajah (2006) determines that an evaluation of the oral language proficiency is usually formed by two categories: language (grammar, discourse, and pragmatic skills) and strategic competence (negotiation and nonverbal skills). However, according to Courtillon (2003) these evaluations involve the linguistic, pragmatic and expressive aspects revision (see figure 2). In this way, these aspects need to be evaluated separately to detect individual strengths and weaknesses in each FL learner. This author states that the evaluation of the oral production needs to be placed in authentic or quasi-authentic situations. It refers to the creation of simulated conditions of real oral language interchange to achieve different needs of communication. In fact, Courtillon (2003) claims that the first need of an interlocutor is the accomplishment of communication. S/he needs to communicate her/his own ideas and understand the consequential messages.

The oral language is required to take part in different life domains (personal, public, occupational, educational, familiar, etc.). In this way, FL students have different needs or motives to practice the oral language procuring to take some advantages in the learning process. These advantages are cognitive, social, and affective (Clerc, 2010) and may be associated to the achievement, power and affiliation needs proposed by McClelland (1958). The cognitive advantages can be related to the need of achievement because they develop a sense of accomplishment with the acquired knowledge. The social ones can be linked with the need of power since it encloses the social prestige and involvement and, the affective advantages can be connected to the need of affiliation because they procure the



establishment of good relations with other human beings.

The theory of the needs demonstrates how the motivation is related to the accomplishment of three principal needs: need for achievement (N-Ach), need for power (N-Pow) and need for affiliation (N-Affil) (McClelland, 1958). The level of importance of each need may vary from one person to another and they influence the actions of people in different contexts (educational, managerial, labor, educational, social, etc.). The N-Ach refers to the need to achieve, be successful and do extremely well. This need requires communication, achievement, progress and a sense of accomplishment. The N-Pow is the necessity to lead, influence, teach, or encourage others and make an impact in doing so to attain a position of greater authority. The N-Affil concerns to the establishment of excellent relations in the human interaction (McClelland, 1958). The fulfillment of these needs operates as motives to learn and practice a particular subject. This is the reason why they may work as pressure sensations to encourage the FL oral communication attaining cognitive, social, and affective advantages.



Research Method

General Approach

The influence of the evaluative setting on the FL oral production is analyzed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods centered in a case study focus. The qualitative side provides specific information about human opinions, behaviors, beliefs and, relationships between the individuals and the social context (Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest & Names, 2005). The quantitative approach is focused on deductions, confirmations, testing of theories, explanations and, predictions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The case study aims to describe and understand the individual sample of the inquiry (Woodside, 2010).

In this study, the data collection methods are: twelve non- participant observations, twelve field notes, a written demographical questionnaire and an in-depth interview to close the study (See appendices). In this manner, the non-participant observations are accomplished during two semesters. They are reported in field notes. The field notes report descriptions of some moments when observations are done. These registers have in its principal parts the date when the observation is done as well as the hour when it begins and finishes and the place where it is performed. They describe the characteristics of the participants as attitude, moods and, observable traits of personality during the English and French language classes. The attitude observations are focused on the favorable or



unfavorable reactions of the learners towards the class, specifically, in the activities related to oral production. Moods observations are centered on the emotional state, temper, feelings like fear or surprise and disposition of students before, during and after the oral evaluations. Personality observations attempts to verify whether the students who are good speakers in their mother tongue maintain this tendency when speaking in a foreign language. The researches make a detail description of the observed setting as well as the attitude and actions adopted by the participants. The researchers take a field note during each observation.

Finally, the participants are required to respond a written demographical questionnaire to establish a trustful social background about them. It included ten questions about items such as age, sex, family context and others social components (See appendix 1). After that, they are interviewed. The interview aims at obtaining personal thoughts of students. The set of open-ended questions are designed in English but the interviewees are able to answer them in Spanish. This strategy is applied to allow the participants to express their opinions without limitations in their responses. The responses are recorded, transcribed, summarized and, coded by the researchers. The interview is applied during the final phase of the data collection period to verify the anterior collected data. The questions of the interview are divided into three groups (See appendix 2). Some learning strategies questions aim to detect the students learning habits and their interests in improving the oral communication. Some perception questions attempt to establish how learners perceive the



evaluative process. Lastly, some motivation questions help to understand how students consider motivation, motivation during evaluation and, motivation influenced by teachers.

This study takes a sample of ten FL students. They study English and French, and their mother tongue is Spanish. They are placed in the B1 linguistic level proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in both languages. The sample is convenient and the amount and characteristics of participants is considered to supply diverse, deep and meticulous data for the purposes of the study. The criterion of participant selection is based on the purposive sampling principle taking into account the goals of the study (Given, 2008). The reasons to select the participants are their permanence during the study (two semesters) and factors of motivation.

The context of the study provides a platform to analyze the human conduct in everyday situations close to natural settings where the participants cannot change or modify their behavior (Hammersley, 1990). Taking into account the first participant selection reason, the study is developed with the same sample in two different locations. The first observations are taken in Cúcuta (North of Santander, Colombia). The participants (5th semester FL students) are observed in the whole university campus without telling them they are monitored. Similarly, the second observations are done in Villa del Rosario (North of Santander, Colombia) when the participants are in sixth semester.

The goal of data analysis is to describe the way the findings and results are obtained



(Brennan, 2005). In this study, the interpretative, recursive abstraction and coding techniques recommended by Kaski (1997) are combined with the model of data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman in 1994. Miles and Huberman (1994) consider three principal stages in analyzing qualitative data and cases in an inquiry (data reduction, data display and, conclusion drawing and verification). Data reduction is addressed to analyze, sharpen, classify, focus, abandon and systematize the findings in a way that conducts to conclusions and allow them to be drawn and verified. The data is reduced and transformed using recursive abstraction and interpretative techniques (summaries, paraphrases and, larger patterns). In the second stage, it is necessary to take the information that has been reduced and display it in an organized and compressed manner establishing codes to compare the relationship between them. These displays allow the easy-drawn of conclusions. The conclusions are derived from regularities of events, justifications, possible arrangements or propositions that have been noted.

Findings

The influence of the evaluating setting on the FL oral production is analyzed in this paper. In this manner, it is found that most of the participants of the study do not participate actively in foreign language conversations if they do not perceive the fact of speaking as a need. This need seems to be related to the evaluation process developed by teachers and shows the main relation between the evaluative



setting and the FL oral production. In other words, the evaluative setting forces the students to speak in the FL they are learning. Various comments in the interview shed light on this topic.

Extract (1)

“It is better to communicate using a language that everybody can understand”.

Extract (2)

“Most of the time, in our daily life, we communicate in Spanish but during the oral evaluations, we speak in the language the teacher is evaluating”.

Extract (3)

“The evaluation pressure makes us forget other goals apart from the grade and we start to speak in English or French”.

This means that participants tended to show a reduced use of the target language they learnt even in academic spaces when it could be supposed they should communicate in the target language. Also, this tendency could be demonstrated when providing the participants the possibility to select the language during the interview and, most of them preferred to use their mother tongue. Only one participant responded the interview in a foreign language (English). One of the participants considered:



Extract (4)

“The mother tongue is the best instrument to communicate now because we feel frustrated when we want to explain or express our ideas using the foreign languages we are learning and we do not know the vocabulary that is required or we do not know how to organize the word order to communicate”.

To overcome this lack of speaking practices, learners considered the importance of speaking with other learners, teachers, foreigners, or relatives. Some learners declare it is not common to speak with other students because some of them reject the FL conversations. Their speaking practices seem to combine two main objectives. On the one hand, some students practice this linguistic skill to get good results in the oral evaluations. They declare that it is necessary to think about the results of the evaluations (See extracts 2 and 3). On the other hand, other students practice speech to improve the skill. They say the grade is just the complement of a good process and they need to be prepared to face real life situations and not only simulations in the university artificial contexts.

Another relevant point mentioned by the participants is the evaluation itself. There are two perspectives that emerge from the collected data. The first fact is related to the importance of evaluation as an instrument to measure and quantify their FL performances. These characteristics permit them to be conscious of the advancement in their learning process and analyze how it could be enhanced. The second perspective tends to question



the reliability of the evaluation assuming that the result they obtain when being tested could not correspond to their real language level proficiency. In this manner, the participants mention the influence of factors as anxiety, nervousness, moods, reactions and, attitude of partners at the moment of being evaluated. Those mentioned elements could affect and block the speech of the students. Additionally, they believe that some feelings related to their background (e.g. fear, personal and familiar problems, lack of pieces of advice, shyness) also may determinate the results of an evaluation.

Another important agent that may have a relevant influence on the results of an evaluation is the evaluator. In this manner, the role of the evaluator was also identified as determinant in the failure or success of the learner during the oral evaluations. Participants reveal they feel comfortable when they detect confidence and a positive attitude of the evaluator. Most of the participants mention that motivation is relevant because it makes students feel comfortable in the development of their linguistic skills. They announce that teachers who use different methods (simulations, monologues, role-plays, interviews, debates), resources (images, photos, posters, drawings), or authentic and quasi-authentic spaces during the oral evaluations tend to develop more motivation and security. As a result, students participate actively. However, the final result of the evaluation would possibly change if the attitude of the evaluator tended to be disruptive by what s/he said or even only by watching his/her moods.



Conclusions

The existence of the evaluative setting forces the students to use the target languages they are learning. Nevertheless, the results of an oral exam are conditioned by the setting and related to the characteristics of the learners taking into account that their oral production responds to needs. The needs expressed by participants concerning to the language use can be classified as needs of power, affiliation and achievement but they also respond to needs of communication when the teacher pressure them to communicate in the target languages in casual conversations.

The setting itself is important because it provides the basis for the arrangement of the evaluative objectives. Furthermore, the different components of the evaluative setting (type of evaluation, context and time, methods and resources and, pressure sensations) influence the oral performances of learners during the evaluations. It can be perceived when the modifications in the context or in the methods of evaluation and resources applied by teachers produce alterations in the linguistic, pragmatic and expressive aspects of the oral production proposed by Courtilon (2003). Additionally, the alterations in the way in which the students are evaluated or in their pressure sensations also influence the results of an oral production exam.



Discussion

There are still few studies analyzing the influence of an evaluative setting on the oral production of FL students. In fact, there is not previous research holding, characterizing and, relating the components of an evaluating setting as a whole. Nevertheless, there are different theoretical frameworks broaching these components separately, e.g., the considerations of Canagarajah (2006) and Courtilon (2003) about FL proficiency evaluations and McDonough and Shaw (1993) about the setting definition. These studies allow an increase in understanding the way the characteristics of the evaluating setting may affect the FL oral production.

The evaluative setting seems to create the need of using the oral language. The students mention diverse learning schemes to practice and improve their speech but these schemes seem not to be applied in real life. However, the involvement in an oral production evaluation placing the student in the center of the evaluative setting seems to activate the cognitive, social and affective advantages of the learning process proposed by Clerc (2010). Therefore, they start to speak in the FL they are being evaluated. This fact shows the answer to the question: how does the evaluative setting influence the oral production?

Hymes (1973) proposes real life communication in FL and Loewen (2007) argues that error correction can be performed not only by the teachers but also by students. The creation of artificial spaces for improving oral production is claimed by Krashen and



Terrell (1983). Additionally, Lozanov (2005) explains how to reduce the sensations of pressure and nervousness creating a comfortable environment leading the students into state of relaxation. In this manner, the attitude of indifference toward speaking can be explained because students feel they can be criticized during the conversations (Moreno, 2007) but it is rejected during an evaluation.

Students mention that during evaluations the reactions of teachers and partners, the methods (individual or collective evaluations), the resources, the contexts (authentic or quasi-authentic), or the pressure sensations they feel may reduce or increase their oral production. In this way, it may be inferred they consider that according to the characteristics of the evaluative setting components and its interrelation, the results of the oral evaluations may vary. However, there may be a few probable theoretical explanations about this fact. McDonough and Shaw (1993) outline how elements of the context might affect materials design, course planning and syllabus design. They did not included how those factors might influence the evaluations results.

In order to gain a complete understanding of the influence of an evaluative setting on the FL oral production evaluations, it is necessary to conduct a study that examines each aspect of the oral production proposed by Courtillon (2003) in relation to the components of the evaluating setting. This includes the revision of the linguistic, pragmatic and expressive speech features taken diverse kinds of evaluations, contexts and times, methods and sources, and pressure sensations. The effects of each



evaluative setting component on the oral production may be different demonstrating its influence on the evaluation results.

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Appendix

Appendix 1



UNIVERSITY OF PAMPLONA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Demographic data

Name:

Surname:

Age:

Sex: Male Female

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced

Cohabitation: With parents With other relatives Alone



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Children: Yes Not

Working: Yes Not

University spending: by your own Your parents Other relatives

Other studies: Yes Not

Previous studies*: University studies Other establishments

* Answer this if you have filled *Yes* in the previous question

Appendix 2

The proposed questions are divided into three groups according to their focus:



Learning Strategies Questions: these questions aim to collect the learning habitudes of students. They also establish the interest of the students in improving oral production.

- ✓ How do you learn Foreign Language?
- ✓ Do you practice speaking?
- ✓ How do you practice speaking?
- ✓ How do you improve your speaking?

Perception Questions: this group of questions attempts to establish how learners perceive evaluation and associated terms such as evaluative setting and motivation. These questions aim also to provide a support to understand the possible answers of the students in other questions of the interview.

- ✓ What is evaluation for you?
- ✓ What is motivation for you?
- ✓ How do you feel when being evaluated?
- ✓ When you listen the term ‘evaluative setting’, what do you think?

Motivation Questions:

These groups of questions are useful to understand the students’ point of view related to motivation, motivation in the evaluation and motivation influenced by the teacher. Also,



their objective is to clarify if the students perceive motivation as a need.

1. These questions clarify why some students reject one of the languages they are studying.

- ✓ Do you think that some languages are better to learn than others? Why?
- ✓ Do you think that the level of prestige of a language is an important reason to study or practice it? Why?

2. This set of questions is related to the teacher motivation in the evaluation process. Also, it explains if students consider the teacher motivation as something beneficial.

- ✓ Do you think that motivation is a significant factor in learning and practicing a foreign language? Why?
- ✓ Do you consider that teacher interaction with you at the moment of an oral evaluation is helpful for you? Why?
- ✓ If you are nervous when being evaluated orally, stop speaking and the teacher helps you with the conversation, do you think that his/her words are important? Or should you try to face the emotional state for yourself?
- ✓ Does the diversity of sources employed in the evaluation motivate you to participate actively and obtain a beneficial result? Why?
- ✓ Do you think that the teacher's personality, moods and attitude influence in the evaluation results? Why?



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3. These questions are important to reveal the meaning of the evaluation for students. Also, they relate good results with motivation and the implication of this combination for students.

- ✓ Does the system of evaluation influence motivation to learn and practice? Why?
- ✓ Do you practice speaking to improve your skill or just to get a good mark in the evaluation? Why?
- ✓ Do you consider that a good mark is a synonym of a good and relevant knowledge? Or there are some external and internal factors that determine the results in an evaluation?
- ✓ If you have gotten a good mark in an oral evaluation but you have studied for a long time, do you feel well because you have studied and learnt or do you feel depressed because you have gotten a bad result?

4. These questions make clear the importance that the oral production have for students. They also verify if students perceive motivation like a necessity.

- ✓ Do you participate actively in foreign language conversations in and outside of the classroom?
- ✓ Do you participate in a conversation in FL if you know that the teacher is not evaluating you and you will not get a mark? Why?
- ✓ Do you think that motivation is a need? Why?



LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: Case study

Daniel Rios Villamizar

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of an exploratory case study conducted in a public University in Cucuta, Norte de Santander Colombia. The objective of this research is to identify the most common language learning strategies used by EFL students and to describe the relation among the strategies and the English level. 8 students were selected by purposive sampling as participants. The data was collected through an English online test, a survey designed by Oxford (1989) and a semi-structure interview. The results indicate that social strategies are the most used by efficient learners, compensatory by more efficient and metacognitive by high proficiency learners. Besides, the results reveal that, the higher the Language Learning strategies frequency of use is, the higher the proficiency level students have.

Key words: Language learning strategies, proficiency, efficient learners, more efficient learners and high proficiency learners.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados de un estudio de caso de tipo exploratorio realizado en una universidad pública ciudad de Cúcuta Norte de Santander, Colombia.



El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar las estrategias de aprendizaje para la lengua más utilizadas por estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras y describir la relación entre las estrategias de aprendizaje de la lengua y el nivel de competencia en la lengua Inglesa. 8 estudiantes fueron seleccionados a través de método de selección de propósito como los participantes. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de un examen en línea, una encuesta diseñada por Oxford (1989) y una entrevista semiestructurada. Los resultados indican que las estrategias sociales son las más usadas por aprendices eficientes, las compensatorias por más eficientes y las meta-cognitivas por aprendices de alto nivel de la lengua. Además, los resultados revelan que, cuanto más alto es la frecuencia de uso de las estrategias de aprendizaje para la lengua, mayor es el nivel de lengua los estudiantes. .

Palabras claves: Estrategias de aprendizaje de la lengua, Nivel de competencia, Aprendices eficientes, aprendices más eficientes y estudiantes del alto nivel de competencia.

Introduction

Learning a foreign language may be a difficult task. That is why many learning/ teaching methodologies such as, Whole Language, Total Physical Response, Natural Method, Task Based Learning, Communicative Method and so on., have been adopted in order to facilitate the language acquisition and to develop communicative ability of students in the target language. However, despite of the huge effort to teach a foreign language properly maybe choosing the suitable material, employing the TICS, implementing new teaching techniques etc., the proficiency



level of our students remains disproportionate in terms of language acquisition, even when they take together the same English classes, in the same grade or semester some students achieve a good proficiency and some other students do not. That difference in English level could be related to the use of language learning strategies as one of the main variables that would influence English students proficiency.

Indeed, some authors as is the case of, Chamot (1998), Cohen and O'Malley (1990) highlight the importance of Language Learning strategies in teaching and learning process of foreign languages. Oxford (2003) stated that "among main factors that help determine how and how well students learn a second or foreign language are language learning strategies". (p.43). Similarly, Harris (2001) stated that "Our ability to use these kinds of tools or strategies was one of the reasons why we became successful linguists. So why do we not share them with our learners? We may have been lucky in that we developed a wide repertoire of strategies". (p. 15). The use of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) could be the strongest set of instruments in order to achieve proficiency in foreign languages.

The researcher was interested in carrying out this study, firstly, because foreign language students may face some difficulties when they attempt to acquire proficiency in the target language. English teachers may have a sight of the student's preferences and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the use of language learning strategies in the learning process.



Literature Review

This section presents the main foundations of language learning strategies (LLS) and English proficiency.

Language Learning Strategies

When learners face several different tasks such as reading a chapter or a book, or preparing a written summary of a passage, they have several options to complete them successfully. These options are called language learning strategies (Richard and Lockhart, 1995). Those options or language learning strategies are among the main factors that help to determine how and how well students learn a second or foreign language (Oxford, 2003). According to Nunan (1999), language learning strategies are mental and communicative processes used by learners in order to learn and use a language which focuses on the importance of learning strategies of students being aware of what they have and what they are doing for their learning process, for instance, when a student has clear goals for improving their English skills or a student identifies his or her English mistakes to get over them. If students are conscious of learning they will become more effective students. In addition, Wong and Nunan (2011) conducted a research on learning styles and strategies of more effective and less effective learners; they suggest that the learners' attitudes influence their learning process because less effective students perceived English just as a subject and the more effective students believed that English is a tool to communicate and they enjoy learning inside and outside the classes.



Hismanoglu (2000) has categorized language learning strategies based on the performance of EFL students. However, the most comprehensive category was designed by Oxford (1990). Her classification of learning strategies complemented these previous models. Oxford identified 62 language learning strategies categorized in two major groups of direct strategies including memory, cognitive, compensation and indirect strategies including metacognitive, affective and social.

The direct strategies are involved unconscious-mental processes, while indirect strategies are consciously used. In other words, cognitive strategies enable learners to interact in the target language; metacognitive strategies help learners to control and regulate their learning; affective strategies help learners deal with their feelings and emotions; and social strategies promote learning through interaction with the speakers of the target language. Memory strategies help learners store and retrieve information; compensation strategies, on the other hand, are employed when learners need to keep communication going despite a gap in their linguistic knowledge. Given that compensation strategies are primarily geared to facilitate communication, they are not perceived as directly linked to learning as other strategies are.

Proficiency

The concept of proficiency has changed over time. In the past, foreign language teaching and learning have been focused on grammar and lexis. However, in the recent years, more



attention has been given to the communicative competence and the appropriate use of language in different context (Harley et al, 2002). Nowadays, to master a language is highly related to student's proficiency which is described by Chomsky (1965) in two important definitions; Firstly, as the learner's knowledge using in the target language. Secondly, as the learner's behavior in front of language tasks and challenges.

Furthermore, the learning process is influenced by several factors, such as the social context, student's motivation, age, capabilities, and learning opportunities (Spolsky, 1989). Those factors enable the language learner to increase the knowledge in at target language. Besides, this can be related to the language learning strategies mention by Oxford (2003) who argued that, social, affective and metacognitive strategies may influence on the student language acquisition process. Language learning strategies could determine the English students 'proficiency.

In this field, several studies have been conducted. For example, Rahimi, Riazi and Saif (2004) conducted a study aimed to analyze the variables affecting learners' choice of strategies, and the relationship, if any, between these variables and learners' patterns of strategy. In this research a group of 196 EFL Persian learners in post-secondary school with low-, mid- and high-proficiency in EFL participated as the sample. Data was gathered through different instruments such as: the TOEFL, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990). Also, a motivation questionnaire and, Learning Style Questionnaire Soloman and Felder (2001) were applied.

The results pointed out the variables that affect learners' choice of strategies, the variables taken into account were proficiency, motivation, learning style, gender and years of language study. In regards to use of strategy categories and learning style, learners reported moderate use except for metacognitive strategies whose mean was



significantly higher than the means of all other strategy categories. The mean for memory strategies, on the other hand, was significantly lower than all other strategy groups, except for the social strategies. In conclusion, the participants' perceptions of their English proficiency level significantly affected their strategy use with more proficient learners employing more strategies in all categories including overall. As the findings demonstrated, graduate students with differential perceptions of their English ability vary in their strategic approaches to language learning. Additionally, the fact that students at different ages tended to use diverse strategies could greatly help producers in their way to develop suitable learning materials.

Wong & Nunan (2011) attempted to explore whether there were identifiable differences in learning styles, strategy preferences, and patterns of practice and use between more effective and less effective learners studying at the tertiary level in the Hong Kong context, and whether any differences were consistent with findings in other contexts. The participants were 674 undergraduate university students in Hong Kong. Data collection of this study consisted of a two-part online survey. The first part requested biographical and attitudinal information and the second part of the survey consisted of a thirty-item questionnaire adapted from the original Willing (1994) survey. This survey asked students to indicate their attitude towards thirty key in class and out-of-class strategies by rating them on a four point scale. The results revealed that in relation to differences between the overall learning style of more effective and less effective learners that the dominant style for more effective students was 'communicative' with over 50% of the students taking part in the survey being assigned to this style. This was followed by 'analytical' then authority-oriented. The less effective students were split between authority-oriented and communicative, with the authority-oriented students just edging out the communicative learners.

Finally, based on the results of differences in enjoyment of learning English between more effective and less effective learners, they revealed a significant difference between more and less effective students. Seventy-eight per cent of more effective but only twenty-seven per cent of less effective students reported enjoying English a great deal. On the other hand, twenty-four per cent



of less effective students reported that they did not like learning English at all.

Lopera (2011) developed an exploratory case study aimed to identify effects of reading strategy on undergraduate students during a reading comprehension course. 26 undergraduate students in a Colombian university participated in this project. Data collection instruments as a reading comprehension tests, teacher's field notes and self-reflection in class at the strategy instruction phase, and a learning perception questionnaire were applied. Data analysis showed that students improved in reading comprehension after having had the strategy instruction. Results revealed that reading strategy instruction is indeed very useful. Also, it was noted that when students applied reading strategies, they became more self-confident and this in turn enhanced their motivation.

Finally, when students applied the reading strategy approach, the use of dictionaries decreased considerably. This paper showed that students improved not only in EFL reading comprehension but also in knowledge of strategies. With the strategy instruction, students were able to develop meta-cognitive awareness in using reading strategies. Moreover, students' attitudes and motivation changed positively toward reading in a foreign language. Specifically, students gained self-confidence as they showed they could interact with different kinds of readings. Finally, as the students applied the reading strategies as they read, the use of a dictionary was reduced as a consequence of reading strategy instruction. However, with these and no doubt other students, it was necessary to guide them in order for them to become autonomous.

Methodology

This study was based on mixed methods research approach, because it allows the researchers to combine and quantitative and qualitative research techniques and instruments to analyze a specific situation (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).



This study adopted main components of qualitative research approach, which is defined as an inquiry process with the purpose of understanding social and humanistic problems. The qualitative enquiry building a complex and holistic illustration, conformed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a real setting (Creswel,1994). Moreover, this research adopted case study design in which is defined as an empirical inquire that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real life context (Yin, 1984).

The research design of this project is divided into two types of case study, exploratory and descriptive cases study. The exploratory case study usually responds to the question 'What' or 'how many' or 'how much' questions. 'Who' and 'where' questions in order to predict the outcomes associated to a specific phenomenon (Hamkim,1987). Consequently, this current research explored what kinds of LLS are most used for efficient, more efficient and high proficiency EFL students. Moreover, according to Hakim, C (1987) descriptive case study may focus on a particular issue or aspect of behaviour with the objective of refining knowledge in a particular area, in order to provide a better understanding of causal processes.

Consequently, this research project adopted descriptive case study in order to illustrate in detail the relation between the use of LLS and English proficiency. Several instruments were used firstly proficiency test to categorize English participants such as effective, more effective and high proficiency students, secondly interviews to know participant's preferences related to LLS. Those Instruments complemented the exploratory phase to describe how LLS could be related to English students' proficiency.



Description of the context

The research took place at the Public University of Pamplona, Villa del Rosario campus.

Participants were students of eight and ninth semester of foreign languages a program of Faculty of Education. Currently, the faculty offers; Bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Communication, Degree in Childhood Education, Degree in Special Education, Bachelor of Social Sciences and Bachelor of Foreign Languages, English – French. The focus of the Foreign Languages program is to educate graduates with a high academic level who promote changes and innovation in pedagogy in order to educate new Colombian generations.

Participants

The research was carried out with ninth and eighth semester English students of the foreign languages program at a public university in Colombia. The population was comprised of 16 students both women and men. The ages of the students range from 17 to 28 years old. They come from different regions of Colombia and Venezuela. The sample consists of three men and five women who were part of the Anglophone literature class. Participants were selected by purposive sampling which allows the researcher to analyze a case pointing out some specific features in which the researcher is interested in. Kluver (1996) claims that purposive sampling is common when special skills are required to form a representative subset of population.

Each participant took an English placement online test proposed by Kaplan international English (see appendix A). At the end the results were given on the screen and sent by email



classifying participants according to the Common European Framework categories. The students were categorized taking into account the level that they obtained in this order; Level B1 “effective students”, level B2 “more effective students” and C1 “high English proficiency students”.

Instruments

Three instruments to gather data were selected, two quantitative data collection instruments, which include an online English test and a survey and finally an interview as a qualitative instrument.

Quantitative Data Collection Instrument

English proficiency Test

A proficiency test is a systematic quantitative data collection instrument, which measures a student’s level in a language. It provides a general view of the language learning process because the learner may see the strengths and weakness in the target language. Kaplan’s free English proficiency test was chosen because it examines approximately four language skills, which are listening comprehension, grammar and vocabulary and reading comprehension.

The online test was composed of 50 multiple choice questions, divided into 3 sections. The first is a grammar test (30 questions), the second a listening comprehension section with two



parts: the first part (7 questions) and the second part (8 questions) finally, a reading exercise (5 questions). At the end the results were given on the screen and by email taking into account the Common European Framework categories, which were recommended as validation of language ability by the European Union Council (2008).

In addition, based on the overall results, a bar chart showed the comparison students' results with the maximum score suggesting what language skill should be reinforced and which was the most remarkable skill among listening, grammar, vocabulary and reading. Finally, an email was sent with the general results and a brief description of the learner's level.

In this research a link to take the test was sent to the participants through an inbox message using Facebook platform. The participants had a week to answer the test and sent the results to the researcher's email. All the scores were collected and participants were categorized taking into account the final proficiency score as "less efficient" or "more efficient" to select the purpose sampling.

Strategy Inventory for language Learning (SILL)

Strategy inventory for Language Learning is a quantitative instrument developed by Oxford (1990). It was first designed as an instrument for assessing the frequency of use of language learning strategies by students at the Defense language Institute in Monterey, California. Two revised versions of the SILL exist, one for foreign language learners whose native language is English (80 items) and the other for learners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL,



50 items). It is estimated that 40 to 50 major studies carried out in the world, including a dozen dissertations and thesis which have been done using the SILL. These studies have involved an estimated 8000 to 8500 language learners. Within the last 10 to 15 years, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy instrument that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The version 7.0 of SILL contains 50 items, and is characterized into six subscales: (a) memory strategies (items 1 to 9), (b) cognitive strategies (items 10 to 23), (c) compensation strategies (items 24 to 29), (d) metacognitive strategies (items 30 to 38), Affective strategies (items 39 to 44), (f) Social strategies (items 45 to 50).

These SILL 50 items were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one to five. The number indicated how often the learner uses the strategies. One means Never or almost never true, two is generally not true, three is Somewhat true and four Generally true for me.

During the data collection process through the survey SILL some steps were carried out, Firstly, a survey was adapted from Strategy Inventory for Language Learning version 7.0 (SILL) Oxford (1990). Secondly, the SILL was passed to a digital version using Google Drive which is a file storage and synchronization service provided by Google (see appendix B). Finally, the digital SILL was administrated by personal e-mails of each participant. Once the participant filled out the survey, the information was retrieved in an Excel spreadsheet and sent it to a personal google count of the researcher automatically.



In this case study, the ESL/EFL 50 items version 7.0 of SILL was employed as an instrument to reveal the range and frequency of language learning strategies used by efficient, more efficient and high proficiency EFL students.

Qualitative Data Collection Instrument

Participant Observation

The first data collection instrument used in this case study was a participant observation, Dewalt (2002) defines “participant observation as the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities, it provides the context for development of sampling guidelines and interview guides.” During this process the setting, population characteristics, language and so on were described (See appendix C). However, due to the fact that the issue of this study is not tangible, it was not evidently through observation identifying LLS used by English students.

Interviews

Six participants were interviewed (three male and three female students) One- on- one interviews were employed in order to focus on particular answers of each participant. According to Creswell (2004) interviews are data collection processes in which the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time.

The interviews were addressed based on survey (SILL) results taking into account the research purpose and questions. Five participants were interviewed



individually, this process took about 10 minutes per participant, the interviews were composed of twelve questions including demographic questions and open- ending questions to know students' perception about the use of LLS in their English proficiency (see appendix D). The interviews were conducted in the middle of the research process and were conducted in Spanish and then questions and responses were translated into English (see appendix E).

One of the interviews was conducted through Skype due to the location of the participant and time. According to Sullivan (2013) the new technologies and approaches have increased the number of instruments used to collect qualitative data in a research, Skype is one of the programs selected to conduct interview with people from a different geographical position. The Skype conversation was recorded and then the responses were translated from Spanish to English.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on explanatory sequential design for purpose of this research; the researchers proceeded to analyze the raw data sequentially. Firstly, the researcher analyzed the quantitative data and secondly the qualitative data.

The quantitative data was obtained from the Strategy Inventory Language Learning, it was organized systematically in an excel spreadsheet using the program Google Drive, where a digital version of SILL Oxford (1990) was adapted by the researcher, this digital instrument was administrated by e-mails to each participant. The data was compiled and overall organized in



columns and lines in a excel spreadsheet. Later on, the researcher classified the information hence, demographic questions, and language learning strategies used by efficient, more efficient and high proficiency students. A Likert scale was employed from one to five to reveal their preferences related to LLS use and frequency taking into account the categorization of Oxford (1990). Indeed, a statistic technique the Mean was used to calculate the LLS frequency for each group, effective, more effective and high proficiency students and another Mean was used to calculate the six types of language learning strategies used by each group as well.

Quantitative Data Analysis

As was mention before, Based on explanatory data analysis design, the quantitative data was analyzed first.

Online proficiency test

As can be seen from figure (1), according to online English placement test, among the eight participants chosen to take the test, the majority (38%) of the participants got a B2 level or High intermediate level, in addition the number of participants with C1 level (25%) and B1(25%) level was the same and only the 12% of the sampling has an A2 proficiency level.



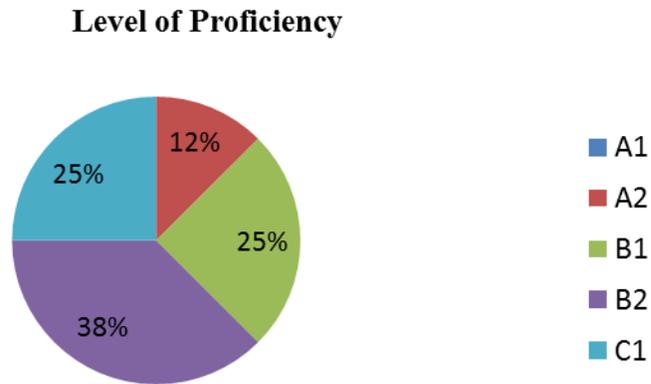


Figure 1. Kaplan English online test results.

The results showed in the figure (1) that the sampling population was grouped according to their level of proficiency, as follows, the first group “effective” students composed by one participant with A2 and two participants with B1 proficiency level, the second group “more effective” composed by three students with B2 level and finally the “high proficiency” group composed by two students with a C1 level.

Survey Strategy Inventory for language Learning (SILL) results

The researcher found that the most language learning strategies used by effective students were Social (3,9) followed by Metacognitive (3,8) language learning strategies. On the contrary, the language learning strategies less used by this group are Memory, Affective and Cognitive strategies scored in (3,0). See table (1)

Table 1



Frequency of language learning strategies use by effective participants

Effective	Memory	Affective	Cognitive	Compensatory	Metacognitive	Social	Total Average
Participant A	3,3	2,7	2,8	5,0	3,7	4,0	3,6
Participant B	2,3	3,2	3,4	2,7	3,8	4,3	3,3
Participant C	3,2	3,2	3,0	3,0	4,0	3,3	3,3
Total	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,6	3,8	3,9	3,4

Measuring the students Language learning strategies effective students' preferences, a set of language learning strategies between Social and Metacognitive which were found as the most frequently used by this sample category as it is illustrated in the bar chart (2).

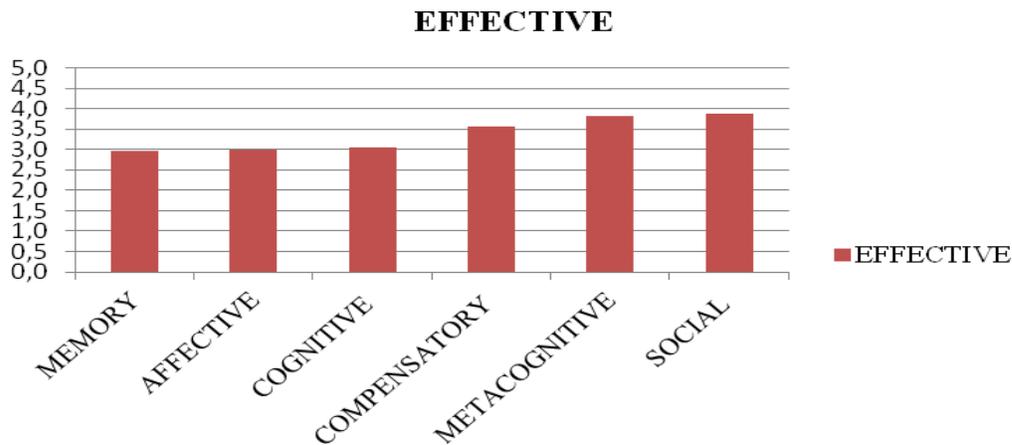


Figure 2. Frequency of language learning strategies use by effective participants.

Regarding the 'more effective students', the compensatory (4,0) Language learning strategies were highly used by them followed by affective strategies

(3,8). On the another hand, memory (3,3) and metacognitive (3,6) were found lowly used by them. (See table 2)

Table 2

Frequency of language learning strategies use by more effective participants

More Effective	Memory	Affective	Social	Metacognitive	Cognitive	Compensatory	Average
Participant D	3,7	4,2	4,0	4,6	4,5	5,0	4,3
Participant E	3,6	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,8	3,7	3,6
Participant F	2,6	3,4	3,7	2,6	2,7	3,3	3,0
Total	3,3	3,8	3,7	3,6	3,7	4,0	3,7

In addition, as it could be evidenced in chart bar (3) compensatory and affective learning strategies were highly scored by the effective sample category.



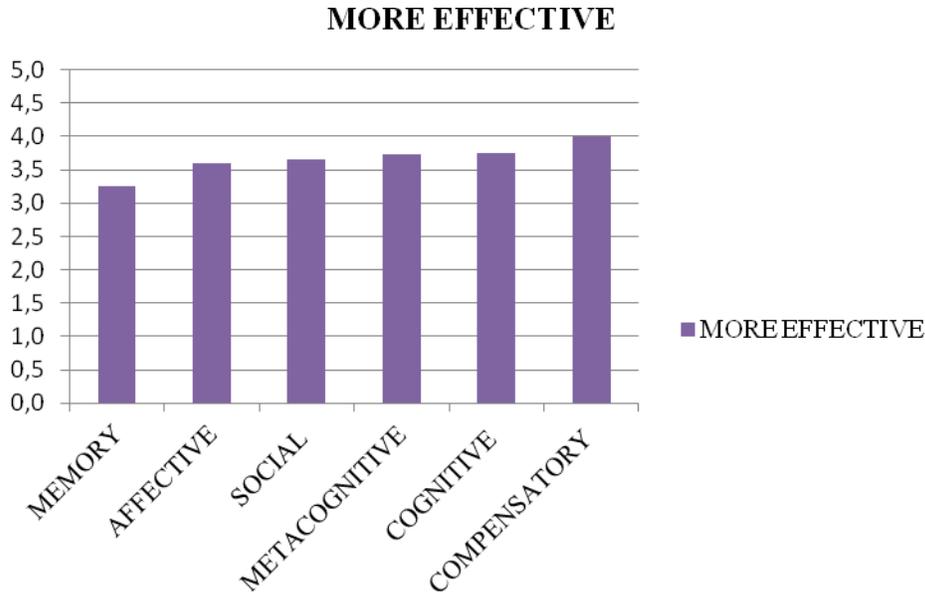


Figure 3. Frequency of language learning strategies use by more effective participants.

Finally, the category labeled high proficiency students, the analysis revealed that Memory (3,7) and Affective (3,8) Language learning strategies were less used by high proficiency students. In contrast, Metacognitive (4,9) and Social (4,7) were the most commonly used by them. (See table 3).

Table 3

Frequency of language learning strategies use by high proficiency participant

High Proficiency	Memory	Affective	Compensatory	Cognitive	Social	Metacognitive	Total Average



Participant							
G	4,8	4,3	4,2	4,8	4,5	5,0	4,6
Participant							
H	2,6	3,2	4,0	4,0	4,8	4,8	3,9
Total	3,7	3,8	4,1	4,4	4,7	4,9	4,2

Two main ranges of languages learning strategies Metacognitive and Social were selected for high proficiency students as it is shown in the bar chart (4).

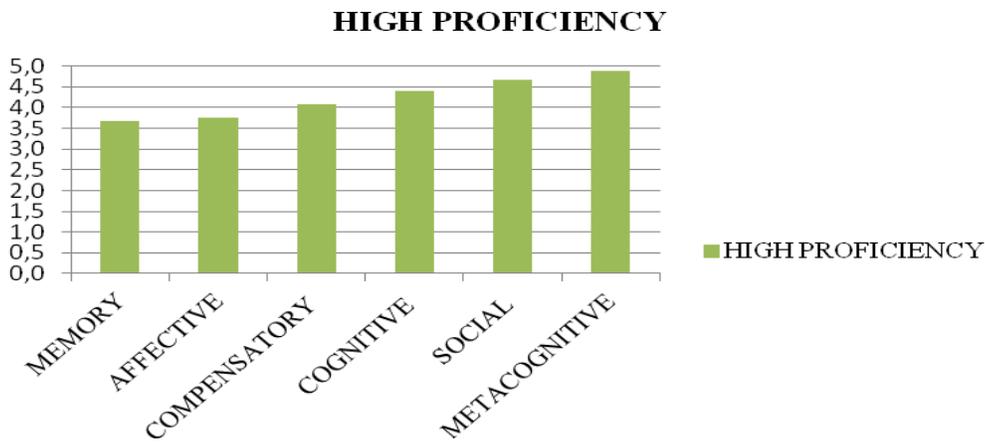


Figure 4. Frequency of language learning strategies used by high proficiency participants.

These previous results revealed the most LLS used by the three categories established by the researcher. Likewise, different types of LLS were evidenced for each category showing that

social strategies were the most used by effective students and the compensatory strategies were the most used by more effective students and finally the metacognitive strategies were the most used by high proficiency students.

Indeed, as is shown in the bar chart (5) the results revealed that the high proficiency students got the highest score of LLS frequency of use. It means, students of this category tended to use all six LLS' types (Metacognitive, cognitive, social, affective, and compensatory and memory) more frequently than other categories of students.

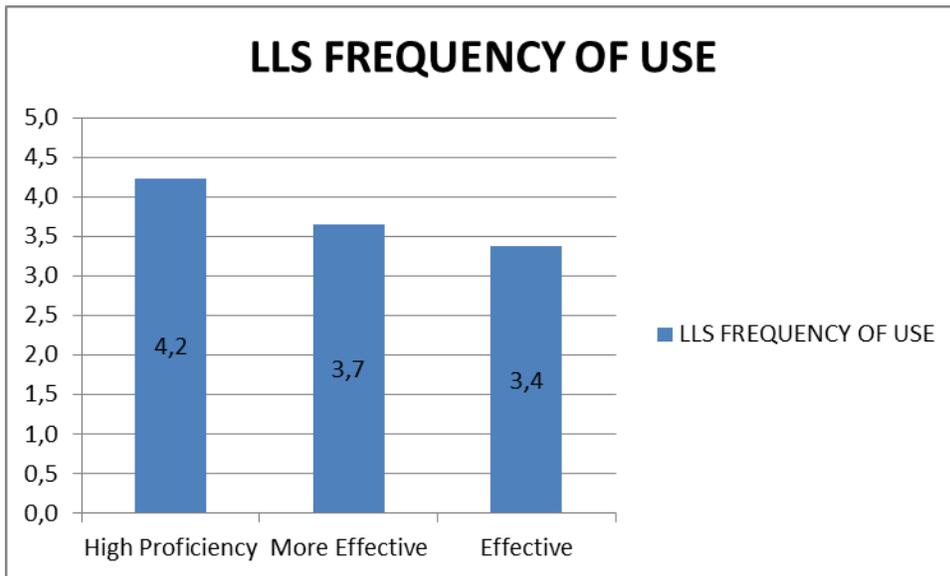


Figure 5. Language learning strategies frequency of use.

Qualitative data analysis

Following explanatory analysis design after having analyzed the quantitative data then the



qualitative data is analyzed in this section.

Interviews

The qualitative instruments selected in this research project were interviews; the records were listened several times to check and translated the participant's answers making note about the first impressions. The participants' answers were analyzed question by question to categorize the data in order to perceive what strategies were in common among participants.

Interview report results

Six participants were interviewed individually, three females and three males, the majority of the participants were among 20- 24 years old and all of them were students. In general, the participants affirmed that they know what language strategies are, but all of them did not know the categorization of the language learning strategies for language acquisition proposed by Oxford. However, most of them had received lessons about the importance of learning strategies (See table 4).

Table 4

Demographic questions answers

	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant G
1.Sex	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male



2.Age	20-24	20-24	20-24	25-30	20-24
3.Language	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
4.Occupation	Student.	Student	Student	Student	Student

From the question related to the different activities to study English, it was perceived that the preferences varied from participant to participant. Each participant had different techniques to study, but some of the most common strategies were: to watch English TV and videos, write down new vocabulary, to read articles from the internet and to listen to English music and radio.

It was perceived that the main obstacle faced by the participants was related to the affective strategies, three out of five did not feel comfortable speaking with people with a higher level because they feel anxious and nervous or they are afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, the participant G, which is high proficiency had the same obstacle as the other participants, but, the learner overcame the difficulties facing the situations and not to avoid social interaction. On the question “Do you think English teachers should teach the language learning strategies as a tool to facilitate the Level of proficiency?” All the participants agreed that teachers should teach some language learning strategies because the second language acquisition may be a collaborative and cooperative process. And 1 out of 5 participants stated “that with the language learning strategies, the learner could make a significant progress in little time”.



In relation with the survey results, the effective group which used social and metacognitive strategies argued that they planned their tasks and time in order to do every activity they have to do. Also, they considered social strategies as a tool to be in contact with others and learn from them as it showed in participant C answer “Social strategies are media to be in touch with others.”. In addition, they considered social and metacognitive strategies useful to increase their English proficiency but one out of two claimed that “I have to use those strategies more frequently” (See table 5).

Table 5

Effective group description of the use of Social and Metacognitive strategies

Question	Participant B	Participant C
8. According to survey (SILL) the language learning strategies used by you are Social and Metacognitive. Why do you use them?	I plan things because I am very distractive and I don't want to forget my tasks. I usually use social strategies in the classroom. When I don't understand something I ask to someone.	I consider that time planning is important. And auto evaluation is relevant. Social strategies are media to be in touch with others.

Concerning to the more effective group, the more common strategies among them were compensatory and cognitive. The reasons argued were different from



participant to participant. According to the participant E, he used cognitive strategies to practice English language skills. The other participant stated that those strategies are related with her learning style. Both participants perceived a positive influence in their level of proficiency as it is evidenced in participant D answers “those strategies facilitate my learning process.” and participant E answer “Because these strategies help me to practice listening, writing and speaking” (See table 6).

Table 6

More effective group description of the use of compensatory and cognitive strategies

Question	Participant D	Participant E
8. According to survey (SILL) the language learning strategies used by you are compensatory and cognitive. Why do you use them?	Because I know what my learning style is, therefore those strategies facilitate my learning process. The process is faster and I don't like to learn things by heart.	Because these strategies help me to practice listening, writing and speaking.

The participant G with a high proficiency level reveled that his preferences with the metacognitive and social strategies were the result of a trial and error process (see appendix F). In



consequence, he had read some articles about efficient ways to learn a second language. Hence, he changed his study strategies and frequency he perceived a significant improvement in his English proficiency (See table 7).

Table 7

High proficiency participant description of the Metacognitive and Social strategies.

Question	Participant G
8. According to survey (SILL) the language learning strategies used by you are Metacognitive and social?	I use those strategies because I made a comparison between the activities that have been efficient for my learning process and the ones that haven't. it is call trial and error. Through the internet I read some articles about how I can learn a language.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to identify the category of language learning strategies used by EFL students of the University of Pamplona. Eight participants were selected among eighth and ninth semester students; they were divided as effective, more effective and high proficiency



learners. The division was done based on the results of the online English proficiency test.

The results from the data analysis show common preferences and differences among the three groups in relation with the type language learning strategies. The efficient participants used more the Social and Metacognitive strategies; however the high proficiency participants used more the metacognitive and social strategies too. In contrast, the more effective participants preferred the compensatory and Cognitive strategies. There was a similarity among the efficient and high proficiency learners. But it was perceived that the high proficiency participants were more aware of the effectiveness of those strategies rather than the effective learners.

Likewise, this research answered if there was a relation among the language learning strategies and the learner's proficiency level. It can be concluded that, the relevant factor in the effectiveness of the language learning strategies was not the type of strategies used by the learners. The key was the frequency of use of those strategies in the learning process. It means, no matter the strategy chosen to study, the English proficiency increased if the learners used a set of LLS constantly.

In general, the frequency of the use of Language learning strategies obtained in this research was the following, the effective learners (2,4), the more effective learners (3,7) and high proficiency learners (4,2). These results supported that there was a positive relation in terms of language learning strategies frequency and the learner's proficiency level.

Also, the participants in general agreed on the idea that teachers should teach or at least



inform them about the tools and variety of strategies for learning a second language. Some of them knew about the strategies but no this knowledge is superficial. A course or section related to language learning strategies could be included in the curriculum of the career.

Future researches could be conducted based on this project, it might be recommended to study why the metacognitive and social strategies were the most common among the learners and if there is a relation between LLS and students' autonomy. In addition, it could be possible to establish a connection among the learner's autonomy and the frequency of language learning strategies.

Concerning to the limitations of this project, it was perceived that among the 26 students of the English linguistic subject, only 8 students showed a positive attitude to participate in this process, the rest of the group complained because of the time demanded to answer the test and survey and others did not want to participate. The lack of information of the learners about Oxford (1990) categorization of the language learning strategies, did not allow them to give a detail and specific reason in their strategies preferences.

Further, the online test did not assess a speaking skills on the target language, consequently, this factor could influence on the general proficiency and position of the learners.

To conclude, the findings were useful and valuable for English teachers and EFL students because participant could realize the importance of language learning strategies in order to improve the English proficiency. Besides, the participants were aware about adding more language



strategies in their English learning process.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A, English Proficiency Test online



» ENGLISH LEVEL TEST

- The test is divided into 3 sections:
- 1. Grammar test (30 questions)
 - 2. Listening test Part 1 (7 questions) and Part 2 (8 questions)
 - 3. Reading test (5 questions).

All the questions are multiple choice. Read the question carefully and click on the answer you think is correct. If you cannot answer a question, click on the 'next' button.

Please fill in your name and email and get the results direct to your inbox after you have finished the test.

First Name*

Last Name*

Country*

Email Address*

I would like to receive promotional offers and information about products and services from Kaplan and its partners.

[View our privacy policy.](#)

» Review

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE KAPLAN INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH TEST

Based on your overall results, your English level is **Higher Intermediate**

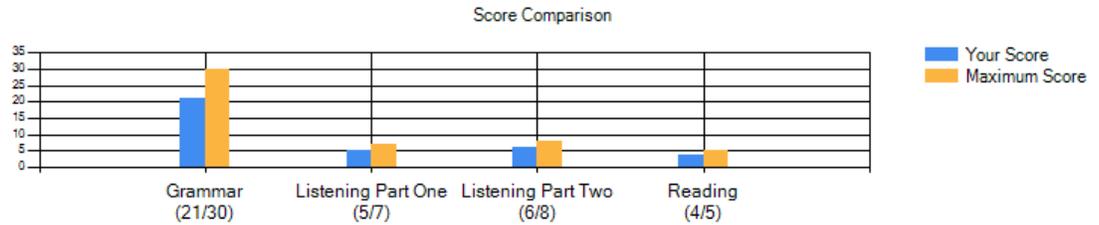


Figure 5. Kaplan platform English proficiency test.



» Review

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE KAPLAN INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH TEST

Based on your overall results, your English level is **Higher Intermediate**

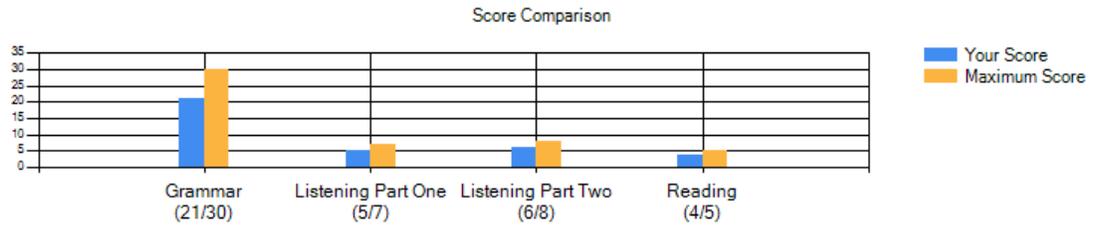


Figure 6. Participant E, bar chart results

The English online test was retrieved from:

<http://quiz.kaplaninternational.com/quiz/English%20Level%20Test>

Appendix B, On-line Survey SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning)



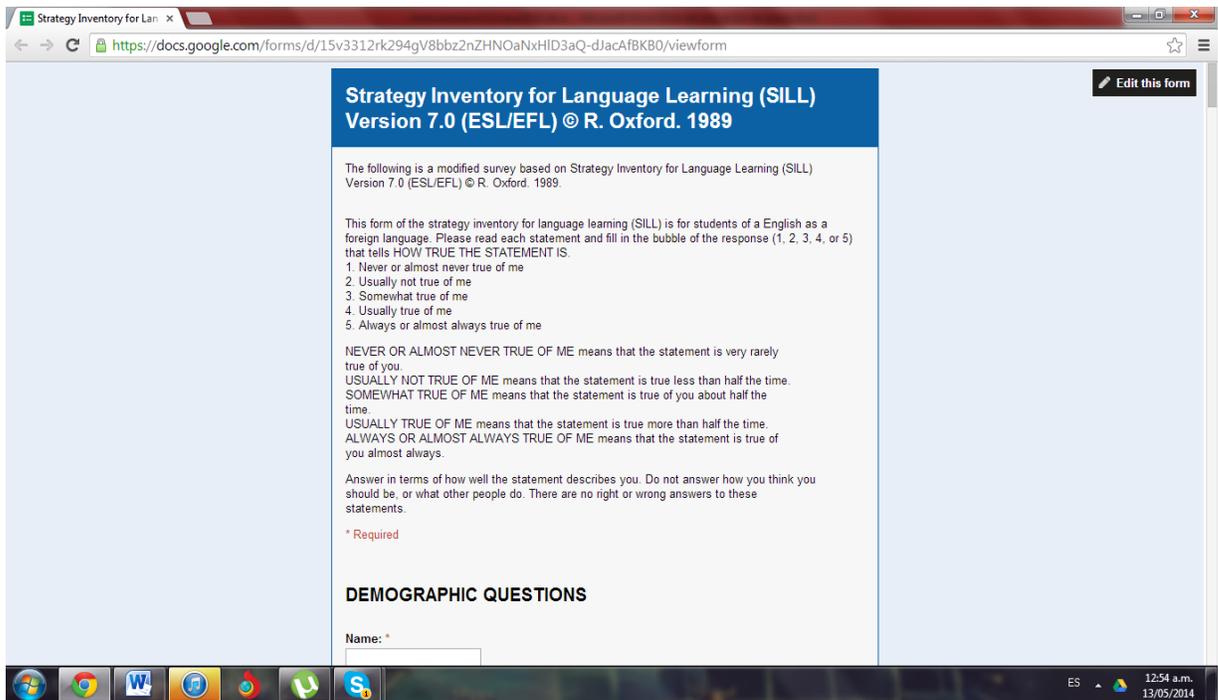


Figure 7. Online survey platform.

The survey was retrieved from:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15v3312rk294gV8bbz2nZHNOaNxHID3aQdJacAfBK80/viewform?embedded=true>

Appendix, C Observation Field Note

Date: May 03 2013

Time: from 09:00 AM to 12:00 M

Duration: 3:00 hours

Researcher: Daniel Rios Villamizar



Open. Writ. Doors. J.
ISSN 2322-9187 • July-December 2014. Vol. 11 • Number 1 • Pamplona,
Colombia.

Participants: 25 **Purpose:** This observation attempts to identify the observable Language learning strategies used by EFL students.

ITEMS	Description	COMMENTS
OBSERVABLES LANGUAGES LEARNING STRATEGIES	Some students asked a favor or posed a question in English. During their English class.	Some students during English class (applied linguistics) talked in English the most part of time. However, at the moment to ask a favor talked in spanish eg: "tienes un sacapuntas?"
	Some students asked teacher for clarifying some doubts or for receiving extra-information. All these questions were posed in English to different person teacher and students.	
	Some students used a lot of gestures at the moment to do their oral presentation.	
	While students were doing their oral presentation some of their class mates wrote in their notebooks.	
	Few students took out their English dictionaries and started searching unknown words.	



Space:	This observation took place in the foreign language laboratory. It has 30 computers, Air condition, TV, a white board and a teacher's desk. Some computers are against the wall and the other in the middle there is not face to face contact with the others students.	
The Individual actors:	The majority of individuals are Colombian people, only two are Venezuelan students all of them are foreign language students English and French. The ages of the students varied from 18 to 30 years old. It supposes they have level B1 for this semester (Seventh).	

Appendix D, Spanish interview Form

Como influyen las estrategias de aprendizaje en la proficiencia de la lengua?

Las siguientes preguntas son parte de un proyecto investigativo, esta información será usada para propósitos académicos y sus respuestas serán anónimas.

Preguntas demograficas:



1. sexo : ___ Masculino ___ Femenino

2. Edad : ___ 16-20 ___ 20-24 ___ 25-30

3. ¿ Cual es su idioma natal?

___ Español ___ Ingles ___ Otro

4. ¿Cual es su ocupacion?

___ Estudiante ___ Empleado Otro _____

Contenido

5. a). Conoce las estrategias de aprendizajes para las lenguas extranjeras?

___ SI ___ No

b). Según rebecca Oxford hay 6 tipos de estrategias aprendizaje para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Las conoce SI___ No _____

6. Ha tenido usted alguna instrucción por parte de los profesores de técnicas para facilitar el aprendizaje del inglés? ___ SI ___ No

7. Mencione algunas actividades que realiza para estudiar o practicar inglés.

8. Según la encuesta SILL (strategy inventory for language learning) el rango de estrategias que usted mayor utiliza es _____ . y _____.

¿Por qué las utiliza?

9. ¿Considera usted que las estrategias _____ que usted



emplea le han ayudado a mejorar su nivel de inglés? ___Si ___ No Por qué?

10. ¿Considera usted que si incrementa el repertorio de estrategias de aprendizajes para estudiar aumentaría su nivel de inglés? ___ Si ___ No

11. ¿Cuál ha sido el mayor obstáculo que ha tenido en el proceso del aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera?

___ Se le dificulta organizar su tiempo para estudiar y evaluar su proceso de aprendizaje.

___ Se siente nervioso al hablar en inglés.

___ Se le dificulta memorizar palabras o vocabulario nuevo.

___ Se le dificulta entender la idea general de una conversación o texto escrito si desconoce algunas palabras de vocabulario.

___ Se le dificulta hablar con personas nativas que lo corrijan y ayuden a mejorar su nivel de inglés.

___ Se le dificulta mantener una conversación en inglés porque no recuerda como se dice alguna palabra o frase.

___ Otro ¿Cuál?

12. Cree usted que los docentes deben enseñar estrategias de aprendizaje para que los estudiantes tengan herramientas que faciliten el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua

___Si _____No.

¿Por qué?



APPENDIX E, English interview format

How do language learning strategies influence the EFL student's proficiency level?

The following questions are part of a research project with an academic purpose. The answers are anonymous.

Demographic questions:

1. sex : ___ Male ___ Female

2. Age : ___ 16-20 ___ 20-24 ___ 25-30

3. What is your native language?

 ___ Spanish ___ English ___ Other

4. What is your occupation?

 ___ Student ___ Employee Other _____

Content:

5. a. Do you know what language strategies are?

X Yes ___ No

b. According to Oxford there are 6 categories of language learning strategies. Do you know what are they like? Yes ___ No ___



6. Have you ever received instructions about language learning strategies and second language acquisition? Yes ____ No ____
7. Name some activities you do to study English -
8. According to survey (SILL) the language learning strategies used by you are _____ . and _____ .
¿why do you use them?
9. Do you consider that the social and Metacognitive strategies have helped to improve your Level of proficiency?
___Yes ___ No . Why?
10. If you add more strategies to your learning process, your English proficiency will increase? ___ Yes ___ No
11. What has been the main obstacle to achieve your English proficiency?
___ It is difficult for me to organize my time to study.
___ I feel nervous and anxious using the English language.
___ It is difficult for me to memorize new words and expression.
___ it is difficult for me to understand a conversation or text if I don't know every word.
___ it is difficult for me to start a conversation in English with a native speaker or student with a high level.

___ Other

12. Do you think English teachers should teach the language learning strategies as a tool to facilitate the Level of proficiency? Yes ___ No ___

Why?

APPENDIX F, English interview example (participant g)

How do language learning strategies influence the EFL student's proficiency level?

The following questions are part of a research project with an academic purpose. The answers are anonymous.

Demographic questions:

1. sex : X Male ___ Female

2. Age : ___ 16-20 X 20-24 ___ 25-30

3. What is your native language?

X Spanish ___ English ___ Other



4. What is your occupation?

Student Employee Other _____

Content:

5. a. Do you know what language strategies are?

Yes No

b. According to Oxford there are 6 categories of language learning strategies. Do you know what are they like? Yes _____ No

6. Have you ever received instructions about language learning strategies and second language acquisition? Yes No _____

7. Name some activities you do to study English

- I read many books at least 3 per month.
- I listen to audiobooks and I usually read aloud to check the pronunciation.
- I watch series and movie s in English on weekends.
- I use web sites with exercises and challenges in English.
- I translate every email I received from Spanish to English.
- I usually listen to music in English.
- I listen podcast and radio every day.

8. According to survey (SILL) the language learning strategies used by you are

metacognitive and Social.

¿why do you use them?



I use those strategies because I made a comparison between the activities that have been efficient for my learning process and the ones that haven't. It is called trial and error. Through the internet I read some articles about how I can learn a language.

9. Do you consider that the social and Metacognitive strategies have helped to improve your Level of proficiency?

Yes No . Why?

These strategies have positively influenced my language proficiency. Since I change my study habits, I have perceived a significant improvement.

10. If you add more strategies to your learning process, your English proficiency will increase? Yes No

11. What has been the main obstacle to achieve your English proficiency?

It is difficult for me to organize my time to study.

I feel nervous and anxious using the English language.

It is difficult for me to memorize new words and expressions .

It is difficult for me to understand a conversation or text if I don't know every word.

It is difficult for me to start a conversation in English with a native speaker or student with a high level.

Other

When I started the university, I was shy and I didn't participate in the classes



because I thought that my English was not good.

12. Do you think English teachers should teach the language learning strategies as a tool to facilitate the Level of proficiency? Yes X No ____

Why?

Teaching learning strategies can help the others students to apply them and improve their English level. Students could apply new strategies.



An invisible school

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Abstract— *creating an invisible school is to achieve the systematization of experiences developed with ICT for the appropriation of digital process among pupils, teaching of primary and secondary school, and university researchers, integrating them to the conceptual understanding of the function knowledge networks. In this case, it is the experience that we present as RedCO/GITT as a knowledge network with the end result of an invisible school as the first step to create on a virtual university.*

Keywords— ITC, knowledge network, virtuality, autonomous education, invisible schools, knowledge transfer, specialized communication

I. INTRODUCTION

This research allows a better understanding of the generation and sustainability of virtual knowledge networks as a scene of specialized training and communication. The organized and systematized academic practices in the knowledge network - REDCO, have permitted us to confirm a process of production of knowledge that contributes to the development of academic, social and cultural scenarios to the understanding of new ways of communication, management and transfer of knowledge in all academic levels to constitute an invisible school [1], [2].

In this sense, from the dynamics and development of REDCO, interpretation and analysis of training and organizational processes inside, the role of ICT is highlighted as educational innovations for sustainable development in order to articulate efforts between academic, social, and cultural peers in different local and international scenarios.

The Decade of the nineties emerges as an academic setting in Colombia. The need to strengthen the research processes being carried out in the country, as a social possibility that can support the inclusion of students in the academic process creating the 'seedbed of research' that invokes the metaphor of seed to realize a new state of formation and growth but also of protection, and since then, it is institutionalized [3]. Creating groups of mainly

undergraduate students who begin in research-related activities and are dynamic involved in some of the specific tasks, such as analysis of data, information and collection or conceptual integrated in other scientific groups, were an important aim.

The analysis and evaluation of experiences in ICT scenarios (virtual), and systematized collation on the developments in the management and transfer of knowledge, use and appropriation of ICT, processes of communication, information, interaction, participation, innovation and cooperation, confirmed REDCO as a methodological matrix towards the management and transfer of knowledge in different educational levels. Through these scenarios, the consolidation of an Invisible School is allowed.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies of this research project provide the possibility of proposing and analyzing in-depth processes of meaningful learning, self-group-analysis and self-assessment to be centered on each participant, i.e. researcher, facilitator, students or coordinator [4], [5]. The core of development is the collaborative analytical work among all participants, according to the teams or institutions involved in the macro project, in this case the CIER Occidente (West). The research group of Education and Virtuality of GITT (Universidad de Antioquia) determinates the Leo XIII educational institution of El Peñol and the I. school Las Palmas de Envigado as its experimental spaces [6]. Therefore, the central purpose of the program becomes a line to guide the development of each internal project, whose individual results summed up in cooperation to strengthen and advance all and each of the applied results that are generated in an integrated and collaborative way between all the cooperating institutions.

Planning and respect for the individual and collective activities schedule allow a harmonic, founded and efficient progress in the process of research and development [7], [8]. The research project is an integrated participatory and



groups of mainly

Four seed-research groups constitute the corpus of this work. These are parts of the developments of the research group on terminology and translation GITT, line of education and virtuality, regarding integration of ICT in research projects as ‘Apropiación de TIC en Escuela Innovadoras del CIER Occidente a nivel nacional’, ‘REDCO para dos semilleros en Instituciones Educativas Innovadoras en Medellín’, el ‘Semillero Universitario GITT’ and the seed group of the Calazans School in Medellín, allowed the conceptual analysis and realization of scientific activities as part of their training. Figure 4. Terminology modeling as knowledge organization



The structure of the knowledge network, taking into account the organizational correlation of terminology modeling of Budin [7] (see figure 4), allows a circulation of specialized information much clearer and precise that gives students better approach to knowledge and to the mobility within the network. In the majority of cases, social networks of knowledge or education supported by WEB, such as Virtual Campus or ICT procedures, lead the constitution of invisible schools.

This is a comprehensive research of qualitative order, it means a participative action research that located the subject-object in the construction of knowledge in a horizontal place and favors the participation as a main principle of such processes. The above allows a much more understandable flow of circulating knowledge, precisely because of the first definition of the basic concepts that are used for the development of the various activities and educational tasks at the different levels of the process. Therefore, the relationship between science, technology and society is currently required to foster a techno-scientific education, aimed at the acquisition of knowledge in an autonomous, efficient, contextualized and virtual way.

The educational paradigms from the new knowledge society, marked precisely by the WEB and ICT, have forced educational systems to transform the programmatic content, attending to the demands of

the environment, generating a shift in the way they conceive, plan and direct processes.

A prominent example that marks a radical change in the conceptualization of this world is the Bologna Communiqué. The demands set out in that document, forced universities, as educational institutions, to improve their curricula to offer programs, plans and projects that allow the approval of acquired knowledge.

According to our academic point of view and scientific approach, we believe that it must also be able to promote the development of competences in the students from their own particular skills according to Gardner [16] and Pulgarín & Pleded [1] not only in Europe but also in our region.

THE VIRTUAL STRUCTURE

Figure 5. Architecture and interaction of actors at the virtual level.

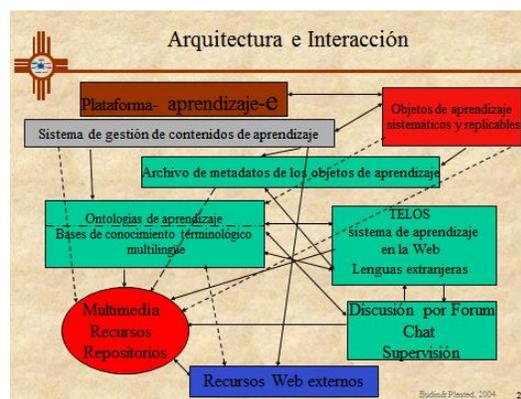


Figure 5 shows the process of strengthening of a scientific community within a network of knowledge. That allows the verification of the configuration process of virtual schools, as spaces for educational training of primary and secondary students and their own teachers as well as the participation of college professors and doctoral students to improve the process itself. According to the progress and results, in short and at medium term, those different processes reached and ratified the possibility to generate a virtual University.

A fundamental aspect of the pedagogic-methodological process of development of the network of knowledge and the process for the generation of an invisible school is the inner architecture that supports the network and the various specialized communities inside as inward development in itself.

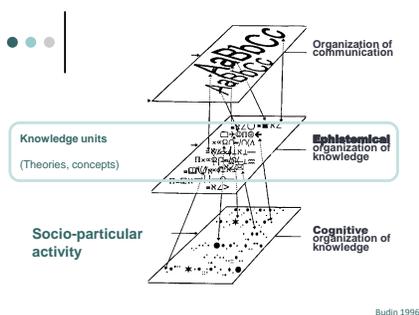


CONCLUSIONS

These collective experiences allowed analyzing and evaluating the development, production and contribution of all participants in these scenarios (virtual) ICT. The first analysis enabled to check the systematization of the developments in the management and transfer of knowledge, in the use and appropriation of ICT in the processes of communication, information, interaction, participation, innovation and cooperation for a network with support of REDCO.

Therefore, the dynamics and development of REDCO and the contextualized analysis of the training and organizational processes, also from the internal structure itself including experiences oriented to co-creation as a collaborative work among peers by means of virtual environments, achieved awareness, motivation and appropriation by the socio-cultural agents of the educational institutions and all members of the research groups [15].

Figure 6. The epistemological level of knowledge, Budin 1996



The results of this research project have improved the epistemological understanding of the main topics and concentrate the work within the concept units' analysis and the knowledge transfer and transformation of some basic parameters of the virtual educational activities as the most important step to develop the whole process in the direction of a very dynamic invisible school [17].

This structure was confirmed as a methodological matrix for knowledge management, as a

place for new virtual scenarios. Subsequent to this, it promotes the establishment of other similar joint venture activities at the virtual level in other areas as social, educational and cultural pilot projects for the region and the country [18]. This experience was also confirmed as the basic step for the creation of other invisible schools, and in the future could be the model to constitute a virtual university.

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To the research team of the Project: Validación de una matriz metodológica para formación de agentes educativos investigadores con el uso de TIC a través de Redco -Red de Conocimiento- como innovación educativa: Eugenia Ramírez, Gerardo Montoya, Wilson Bolívar and María Cecilia Plested. The latter on as coordinator of the research team of the 'Seed-Network REDCO-CIER Occidente' with Adriana Lucía Díaz, Leidy Gómez, John Acevedo, Adrian Piedrahita and Maira Alejandra Pulgarín, and the other research persons of the 'Educación y Virtualidad' research field of the Research Group on Terminology and Translation GITT of the University of Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

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Le stage en FLE à l'Université de Pamplona : pour une démarche formative réflexive

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RESUMÉ

Dans cette article, on souhaite apporter des éléments d'analyse autour des stages d'enseignement des langues étrangères, particulièrement du FLE, en partant de quelques notions qui peuvent contribuer à la question de l'apprentissage à partir de l'expérience. On aborde plus précisément le concept de réflexion (Pultorak, 1996) ; la réflexion-dans-l'action et la réflexion-sur-l'action (Schön, 1983) ainsi que ses différents niveaux (Van Manen, 1997). En ce qui concerne la méthodologie utilisée pour ce travail, on conçoit la réflexion comme un processus clé dans la recherche-action. Ce projet s'est développé pendant un an avec la participation de 7 stagiaires. Partant d'un corpus de cahiers de planning, des fiches d'observation de classe, des extraits de réflexions de la part des stagiaires et des tuteurs, il est possible de faire une analyse dont l'objectif est de pointer les spécificités au niveau conceptuel, méthodologique et linguistique. En plus de l'accompagnement sur le terrain, l'objectif de ce travail est de fournir aux futurs enseignants une formation initiale adaptée aux réalités éducatives ainsi que les initier à l'acte réflexif comme point central dans leur pratique professionnelle et leur formation continue.

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Magdaleydy Martínez Cáceres est titulaire d'une Licence en Langues Étrangères (Universidad Industrial de Santander), d'une Maîtrise en Langues, Littératures et Civilisations Étrangères (Université de Tours) et d'un Master en Didactique de Langues Étrangères (Université d'Angers). Elle travaille en tant que professeur de français et du Didactique du FLE à l'Université de Pamplona. Elle fait partie du Groupe de Recherche en Langues Étrangères, GRILEX et y oriente des cours de recherche formative à l'intérieur de la Licence en Langues.



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Dans cet article on abordera la question des démarches réflexives dans la formation d'enseignants, portant l'attention plus précisément sur le stage en FLE comme une étape de professionnalisation des enseignants débutants. Dans la première partie de cette contribution, on présentera le dispositif de formation professionnelle au sein de la Licence en Langues Étrangères, la deuxième partie développera le concept de réflexion sous différents angles, la troisième partie sera consacrée à la présentation et à l'analyse d'un corpus recueilli avec des stagiaires lors de leur première expérience d'enseignement. Finalement, on montrera comment cette démarche permet d'identifier des défis dans la formation des professeurs de langue au niveau conceptuel, méthodologique et linguistique, ainsi que la possibilité d'initier les stagiaires à l'acte réflexif en formation initiale.

Contexte de l'étude

Lors du travail d'auto-évaluation du programme de Licence en Langues Étrangères de l'Université de Pamplona, un premier constat s'impose : les étudiants n'ont pas assez d'espaces d'entraînement avant de faire leur stage final dans une institution éducative. Une deuxième observation est que, trop souvent, les étudiants de la licence trouvent que leurs cours d'approfondissement sont centrés sur l'étude des théories des



différents auteurs mais n'abordent pas les questions trouvées au sein des dispositifs d'enseignement des langues étrangères. À ces perceptions à l'intérieur de la Licence vient s'ajouter une nouvelle réforme des lois pour les programmes de formation de maîtres qui demande en 2010, l'inclusion d'une année de stage obligatoire avant l'obtention du diplôme.

Dans ce contexte, le programme s'est posé alors les questions suivantes: Est- il possible de fournir aux étudiants des espaces de formation *in situ* avant leur pratique professionnelle ? Comment mettre en place un dispositif d'enseignement du FLE à l'intérieur du programme de Langues Étrangères ? Comment articuler les aspects théoriques et les pratiques sur le terrain ? Comment accompagner les stagiaires et évaluer cet espace à la fois d'enseignement et d'apprentissage ?

C'est ainsi que le dispositif de formation professionnelle est né. Cinq moments dans la formation des diplômés qui permettent l'entraînement *in situ* pour l'enseignement et l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère. On cherche essentiellement la transformation du stage d'enseignement, conçu auparavant comme un produit final de la formation, dans un processus continu construit grâce à une expérience accompagnée par des enseignants experts, tout au long de cinq semestres au cours de la Licence.



SEMESTRE	DISPOSITIF DE FORMATION	N° HEURES
6 ^{ème} semestre	Tutorat	15h
7 ^{ème} semestre	Assistant des Enseignants	25h
8 ^{ème} semestre	Enseignant Débutant	30h
9 ^{ème} semestre	Enseignant Bénévole	60h
10 ^{ème} semestre	Stage professionnel	200h

Tableau 1: Tableau explicatif Dispositif de formation professionnelle

Pour la première étape, l'étudiant en formation fait un accompagnement un accompagnement à un apprenant de niveau débutant. Ce tutorat entre pairs lui permet d'aborder les principes de l'enseignement individualisé ainsi que les stratégies d'apprentissage. La deuxième étape propose aux étudiants un espace à l'intérieur des cours de la Licence où il / elle accompagne un enseignant dans son cours commençant par une période d'observation, suivi des activités de correction et des activités de classe. Pour la troisième étape, le stagiaire prend en charge un cours de FLE dès sa conception jusqu'à l'évaluation. Pour les deux dernières étapes, les stagiaires s'insèrent dans le monde professionnel: en école primaire d'abord; et au collège ensuite. Le nombre d'heures pour



chacun de ces moments est donné en fonction du degré d'implication de l'apprenant dans chacun des espaces du dispositif.

À l'intérieur de ce dispositif, on trouve alors un espace pour les enseignants débutants qui font leur premier stage en FLE (8^e semestre). C'est ici où l'on centre cette étude.

Le concept de réflexion

Dans cet article, on souhaite apporter des éléments d'analyse autour des stages d'enseignement des langues étrangères, particulièrement du FLE, en partant de quelques notions qui peuvent contribuer à la question de l'apprentissage à partir de l'expérience. Étant donné que l'un des objectifs de la Licence est la formation des enseignants réflexifs il est nécessaire de réviser cette notion.

Le concept de réflexion a été l'objet des différents travaux surtout chez des auteurs anglophones. En langue française on remarque le travail fait par un groupe de chercheurs québécois qui donne un regard critique sur la question, en proposant une révision littéraire qui organise le concept de réflexion selon trois tendances : comme un processus, comme une thématique, et comme une échelle hiérarchique. Ces auteurs expliquent la réflexion comme une méta-compétence « impliquée dans tous les domaines de la vie d'un individu et qu'il est possible de la développer à partir d'expériences d'ordre professionnel, social et personnel » (CORREA et al, 2010). Cette méta-compétence est développée grâce à la construction collective et à une proximité de l'action suivie de la prise de distance de l'événement sur lequel on réfléchit.



À cet égard, Donald Schön établit une différence entre la réflexion-dans-l'action et la réflexion-sur-l'action (SCHÖN, 1983). La première correspond à une prise de décision sur le champ, et la deuxième existe quand il y a une distance temporelle par rapport à l'événement. Celle-ci est faite grâce à la verbalisation, c'est-à-dire la description de l'expérience de la part de l'enseignant. À ce moment, il est donc question de voir comment ce concept s'articule au stage en FLE à l'Université de Pamplona.

Provoquer la réflexion

En ce qui concerne la méthodologie utilisée pour ce travail, on conçoit la réflexion comme un processus clé dans la recherche-action. Celle-ci rend compte des trois moments de l'acte d'enseigner : planifier, enseigner et y réfléchir. Partant d'un corpus de cahiers de planning, des fiches d'observation de classe, des extraits de réflexions orales et écrites de la part des stagiaires, il a été possible de faire une analyse dont l'objectif a été de pointer les besoins au niveau conceptuel, méthodologique et linguistique des stagiaires dans cette expérience formelle d'enseignement. Ce projet s'est développé pendant deux ans avec la participation de 15 stagiaires, qui orientaient un cours de français pour un public de niveau débutant.

Le corpus analysé inclut des cahiers de planning des stagiaires où l'on peut cueillir des informations lors des moments antérieures et postérieures à l'exécution de la classe. Pour ce qui précède l'enseignement *in situ*, dans le plan du cours les stagiaires fixaient les objectifs, les étapes, les compétences, les activités et les ressources pour chaque séance de classe (*Annexe 1 : Plan de cours*). Cette étape de planning est toujours accompagnée par



l'enseignant expert. Pour favoriser une démarche réflexive, une partie de cette fiche est dédiée à des commentaires et des réflexions de la part du stagiaire en charge de la classe. Celle-ci est écrite, comme le dit Schön, en prenant une distance temporelle par rapport à la séance de classe.

Les observations de classe ont été faites par deux observateurs : D'une part, l'enseignant dans le rôle de conseiller pédagogique qui à l'aide d'une fiche décrit la classe et en fait des commentaires (*Annexe 2: Fiche d'observation*). D'autre part, un stagiaire qui, pendant une heure de la séance, observe son co-équipier en prenant des notes sur sa performance. Cette méthodologie de travail permet aux observateurs d'avoir un rôle actif car ceci favorise la prise des décisions lors de l'étape de planning pour la classe suivante,. Une fois la classe est finie, les deux stagiaires sont invités pour une séance d'analyse du travail fait. Chacun à son tour fait une description libre de la classe qu'il a orientée, ainsi que les réflexions sur la classe observée. Ce bilan permet de trouver des stratégies pour surmonter les difficultés et partager ce qu'ils considèrent comme des expériences à succès.

Dans ce dispositif, la réflexion fait partie d'un cycle où l'on peut revenir sur ses actions, comprendre ses décisions et en modifier sa performance. Ce processus est composé d'une réflexion au niveau personnelle sur sa performance au moment d'enseigner et une construction collective à partir des commentaires faits par le co-stagiaire et par l'enseignant expert. Le cycle continue lors de la planification de la classe suivante où les stagiaires doivent prendre des décisions qui permettent de surmonter les situations difficiles de la classe ainsi que de valoriser



ses atouts. Au même temps, le stagiaire révise ces situations pendant un moment d'écriture de sa propre réflexion qu'à la fin du stage prend la forme d'un journal de bord.

En plus de donner un panorama sur la première expérience formelle des professeurs en formation, l'analyse des informations recueillies permet d'évaluer les objectifs et le syllabus de la Licence et plus précisément du cours de Didactique de Langues Étrangères autour duquel s'articule cette expérience. Lors de la mise en commun des réflexions à l'oral et à l'écrit on revient souvent sur un certain nombre des préoccupations communes aux stagiaires.

Pour les premières séances de classe on trouve un sentiment d'insécurité de leur part ainsi que la remise en cause de leur rôle en tant qu'enseignants. C'est ici où les stagiaires confrontent leurs acquis et leur capacité à orienter une classe de langue de manière efficace. Le fait de se retrouver face à ce contexte fait ressortir un nombre des questions où l'on donne du sens à l'étude des théories linguistiques, d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. Certains stagiaires s'inquiètent sur les techniques d'enseignement, le choix des ressources, l'organisation des activités ou l'incorporation des aspects culturels dans la classe. D'autres, plus axés sur l'interaction, se posent des questions sur leurs compétences langagières, sur comment se faire comprendre en classe et comment favoriser la participation des étudiants. Il y en a même qui se demandent sur leurs capacités innées pour l'enseignement et qui montrent un besoin permanent de trouver les stratégies qui vont aider à surpasser les difficultés et les imprévus.



Bilan et perspectives

Les différentes réflexions recueillies lors de cette expérience représentent les émotions, les difficultés, les succès et les défis que les stagiaires en langues étrangères vivent au quotidien. Sa compilation permettrait de créer un profil de ce qu'on appellerait « l'enseignant modèle », celui qui a tous les savoir-faire est qui est capable d'agir face à un grand nombre des situations dans les classes. Néanmoins, l'objectif de ce travail n'est pas celui de donner la formule magique pour un enseignement sans contraintes mais d'initier les enseignants à l'acte réflexif comme point central dans leur pratique professionnelle et leur formation continue. Permettant de baliser le chemin parcouru par un enseignant novice, cette expérience n'est qu'un point de départ qui permet d'orienter ses choix méthodologiques. Cependant le développement de la réflexion comme une méta-compétence, requiert la mise en place d'un dispositif qui permette de réfléchir pas seulement à l'acte d'enseigner mais dans les étapes initiales de formation, à l'acte d'apprendre.

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Annexe 1 : PLAN DE COURS

GROUPE:		NIVEAU:		CLASSE N°:		DATE:
OBJECTIF COMMUNICATIF:		OBJECTIF LINGUISTIQUE:		OBJECTIF SOCIO-CULTUREL:		
ETAPES	DESCRIPTION DE L'ACTIVITÉ	MINUTES	COMPÉTENCES	CONTENU	RESSOURCES (Anexes)	REFLECTION



WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT COLLECTING DATA AS A NOVICE RESEARCHER

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This paper is an attempt to describe the experiences I have gone through, as an undergraduate student researcher, during the data gathering process. I will explain the different steps I have followed, for instance, reading how to carry out the data gathering process in order to understand what my contribution and what my role as researcher would be. In addition, I will illustrate the bracketing process I did in order to avoid interference with my assumptions and preconceptions on methodology and teaching materials. I will also describe the changes I have made as a result, in part, of a reflective process; for example, why I decided to narrow down the focus of my research based on the first three classroom observations. I will then describe the experiences of conducting a qualitative interview for the first time, from piloting the interview questions to the interviewing process itself. Finally, I will share my feelings on the affective experience of doing research with a co-researcher.

Before starting the data gathering process, I learned from Hatch (2002) and Patton (1990) about strategies to identify the appropriate methods to carry out the gathering of data. I realized that teachers who become researchers may improve their own practice and contribute to enrich their



student's learning process. I was surprised and glad at the same time to be part of this journey as I learned first-hand as I collected data.

One of the first aspects I was curious about was to know how to bracket out my assumptions and to understand what my role as an undergraduate student researcher would be. Therefore, I read several articles and papers in order to be aware of what I could do and avoid when conducting the data gathering process. For example, I understood that although I was an undergraduate student researcher, I was the main instrument of data collection. Taking into account that bracketing is used to "...describe a specific strategy for separating impressions, feelings, and early interpretations from descriptions during qualitative data collection" (Hatch 2002, p. 86), I wrote down my understandings on methodological issues when learning and teaching a foreign language in an attempt to remove them from the study. I realized that I had to put aside all my assumptions and preconceptions in order to keep a "neutral stance" (Patton, 1990) during the data gathering process.

The first step I followed during my bracketing process was to identify my assumptions with regards the appropriate way to teach English as a Foreign Language. The following paragraph illustrates my assumptions regarding the influence of the methodology on students' learning process:

I'm interested in knowing what the influence of methodology on the students' learning process is when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). I consider that learning a new language involves a particular procedure; it is not the same



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teaching math as teaching history, or indeed teaching a new language. Among the factors influencing students' achievements, "...the role of the teacher is the most important inside the classroom" (RAND Corporation, 2012). Therefore, what the teacher knows and what the teacher does to teach the language might affect students' learning process; obviously, it is not the only aspect to take into account, but it is indeed one of the most important.

However, the bracketing process was just the starting point for me to become aware of the complexities of teaching methodologies. I decided to write about four elements that I considered crucial when thinking about teacher's methodology. The following paragraph illustrates the first element, the different methods and approaches that each teacher follows when teaching EFL:

With regards the methodology, I consider that the teachers must adopt and adapt the best from each method, strategy, technique, material and activity to accomplish their objectives because every method has its own advantages and disadvantages, none is perfect. As a result, being focused on just one method is not enough to teach effectively; teachers should know what the best approach, methodology and strategies to teach a foreign language are. The methodology basically involves everything that the teachers do inside the classroom to teach the language; for instance, the methods and approaches they use, the activities, the materials, the strategies, their beliefs, their attitude and their control over the class.

I have come to understand that methodology involves basically all that the teacher does inside the classroom to teach the language. In consequence, I wrote about methods, approaches, activities, materials, the strategies, the teacher's beliefs, the teacher's attitude and their control over the class in order to bracket out my assumptions of them. I learned from RAND Corporation (2012),



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a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis that “many factors contribute to a student’s academic performance.” However, research suggests that, among school-related factors, teachers matter most” (p. 1). In other words, what teachers do inside a classroom facilitates / hinders a successful students’ learning process. The following paragraph illustrates the second element, activities that each teacher develops during the class in order to teach each lesson:

Similar to the methods, the activities cannot be repetitive because that might discourage students, and being predictable is synonym to boredom. So teachers should prepare a large repertoire of activities to motivate students and make each class interesting and unique.

The following paragraph illustrates the third element, the materials implemented by the teacher during the class; at that time I did not know that this subject would become the new focus of my research as I will explain later on:

Materials are also an aid to teach as they are a support to carry out an enjoyable activity. It is not the same learning from the board all the time as having recordings, videos, flashcards and countless resources to learn each topic. It is important to include the most appropriate material according to the students’ needs and the objective of the lesson. However, planning a vast number of activities and having a large quantity of materials it is not enough. The strategies are also important because it is not only about including a lot of materials and activities, but knowing how to use them wisely.



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The following paragraph illustrates the fourth element, the role of teachers. I believe that they are the bridge connecting knowledge and the students' learning process.

On the other hand, the importance of beliefs is evidenced in the way teachers teach. The way they teach grammar or pronunciation will influence the selection of methods, strategies, materials or activities. Therefore, teachers should be aware of their responsibility while shaping and guiding learning instead of being a factor of inhibition. Similarly, teachers' attitude is equally important since they serve as mediators. Then, positive teachers' attitude might help students become successful learners.

Personally speaking, I would say that the subtle interplay of all these aspects represents the most suitable methodology to teach EFL. However, these are only my own assumptions. Supposedly, having stated them would help me avoid biases during my research.

With regards the changes I have undertaken while conducting the data gathering process, I realized that, at the beginning, I was too ambitious. I wanted to study the teacher's methodology. Nevertheless, having conducted three non-participant observations I realized that methodology was a complex subject to be investigated in only three and a half months. Then I decided to narrow down the focus of my study to the teaching materials and their role in an EFL classroom. This decision was made based on what I had previously observed, where I perceived that students worked with an array of materials implemented to develop their four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking). Another motive was the limitation of time. That is to say, I would be able to observe only one session out of four my case's participants have during the week. As a student researcher, I am taking four more courses resulting in crossed schedules. Consequently, the data



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gathered in this research would not be enough as I would be able to observe only one class every Thursday.

I wrote down a new paper reflecting on the role of materials to teach a foreign language. In doing so, as I narrowed the topic down, I bracketed my ideas on teaching materials. The following paragraph is an extract of the aforementioned paper.

Materials are tools which facilitate the teaching process; they are a support for the teacher because they can make the explanation easier. However, the teacher must not forget that they are tools. That is to say, the teaching materials are useless if the teacher does not exploit them appropriately. Similarly, the teacher must avoid at all costs letting the teaching materials be the core of the class, because they are just a support and, the one in charge of the class is the teacher.

Having reflected on my preconceptions of the topic under study has allowed me to become aware of my role as a researcher. Hopefully, this reflective process would help me to prevent any biases throughout the data collection procedures.

Once I started observing participants in the setting, I wondered whether my presence in the classroom would interrupt the normal pace of the lesson that I attempted to observe. At the beginning I was seated at the back part of the classroom and students seemed to be uncomfortable, peeking at me several times during the class. Therefore, for the second observation I decided to change my sitting spot, and I moved to the front of the classroom. This simple change enabled me to observe everybody's faces and to keep track of their reactions towards different class activities. Fortunately, students seemed to be at ease with my presence. I suspect that while seated at the back students might have been worried about what I was doing, what I was observing and who I was



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observing to. Conversely, being seated in front of them, students felt more relaxed. Maybe, I assume, they were able to watch over me then they did not see me as a threat anymore.

Regarding the interviewing process, I was afraid of being insufficiently trained to carry out an effective interview. Based on what I had learned in class, I prepared the questions and piloted them along with my co-researcher to verify that they were understandable. I was also worried about being recorded because I do not like hearing my own voice from a recording device. When the time came to conduct the interview, we went to the designated place and started recording. Although I was feeling anxious, I felt more relaxed as the interview unfolded.

Four key informants were interviewed. The first key informant was interviewed by my co-researcher. By modeling the first one, my co researcher helped me confirm the necessary steps for a successful interview and boosted my confidence. From the second key informant's interview onwards we divided our roles; my co-researcher would be in charge of the introduction and I would be in charge of asking the questions. I felt confident when conducting the second interview as our key informant seemed to easily understand each question. The third interview, however, was more challenging because our key informant seemed to be shy. When asked, she hesitated to answer the questions. She sometimes forgot what she wanted to say. I tried to make her feel calm. However, I shared her nervousness as I struggled asking her the interview questions. It was really hard to control my nervousness. Somehow I managed to successfully interview, though. Sadly, I think that the answers she gave me did not provide enough data but that was all that I could get from her. I have been thinking that we may need another session with her but first we would have to prepare

better to obtain the information we needed. She seemed to have problems when being recorded. I can infer it since she was speaking freely before starting the interview; nevertheless, once I started recording, she became nervous and insecure. Finally, the fourth key informant provided more information than the others. In a way he was contradicting some of his classmates' statements. This made me realize the importance of knowing our participant's perceptions because each one had their own opinion about the way the materials were implemented in the class and which we would not be able to know otherwise.

With regards the experience of doing research with a co-researcher, I have identified four advantages, as follows: First, it was easier for me to defend the proposal with a co-researcher. It made me feel more confident. I assume that as undergraduate researchers we all feel anxious during our performance. Second, when writing the proposal, working in a team saved us a lot of time. For example, we divided the papers that we were supposed to read. It was a relief having a co-researcher because we were able to make better use of our time. Third, we were able to rehearse together for the oral defense which helped us to correct our mistakes in pronunciation, and to be focused on the content. Four, during the observations, it was beneficial to observe in pairs. We complemented each other's data. For instance, my co-researcher noticed key aspects I missed, and vice versa. We also split the focus of our observations to reduce the possibilities of missing some aspects and, moreover, we clustered her perceptions and mine to obtain a higher panorama of the class.



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Regarding the disadvantages, I found three: First, I have always worked alone since I was a kid; therefore, I was worried whether I would be able to get along with my co-researcher because doing research with somebody else implies extra responsibilities. Fortunately, I adapted to this new working environment. In fact, my co-researcher and I made a good team. Second, we usually spent too much time deciding on specific aspects and procedures about our proposal. Discussing these types of issues may have enriched our proposal. Third, we had time constraints during the oral performance because we had to fix it in a way that we were both able to participate; therefore, I sometimes had something I wanted to say but I had to save it to not waste too much time.

Despite the difficulties I do not regret the decision of having been part of a team research because I feel that there are more benefits than problems. For example, it is a great experience to have overcome my shyness. In addition, the advantages of having a co-researcher will remain throughout the project. Although I have made a good progress, I am looking forward to see what other changes I may make next time. I am certain there is a long way to go and I am training myself to become a better observer to gain more experience and, of course, to always leave my biases aside.

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