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Volumen 6 - Número 1 - Abril 2024

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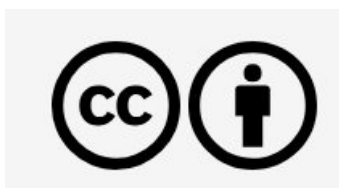
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ÑEMITÝRÃ es una revista arbitrada que publica trabajos de investigación inéditos, notas y reseñas sobre temas de investigación en educación, cultura o sociedad en su interrelación con la lengua, ya sea inglés, alemán, portugués, francés, guaraní o español; con el objetivo de difundir y debatir avances e innovaciones. El contenido está dirigido a especialistas, investigadores, docentes y estudiantes del nivel superior

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Editorial

Critical Issues in ELT- Thematic Issue

Aspectos críticos en la enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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Welcome to this Thematic Number of our Ñemityra Journal on Critical Issues in English Language Teaching (ELT). In this edition, we explore topics that go beyond the teaching, learning or proficiency of the language and have an impact on the development of students or teachers in ELT.

Not everybody likes changes or innovation, however, change is a constant element in all aspects of human life. Language teaching and learning have also changed and evolved, now teachers and students get involved in a more globalized world. This fact makes them realize of other realities and they can engage in dialogues that can open up their personal and professional perspectives. Innovation is the way educators engage in creating new ways to do what they have doing but adapting these actions to new situations and new contexts. In these new contexts is that Critical Issues emerge in ELT. According to Kubota (2020), criticality engages with several aspects related to culture, gender, identity, and intercultural skills. The incursion of criticality in ELT, for some decades now, has had an effect on the efforts that scholars around the world have made in order to raise awareness on issues that still try to maintain certain ideologies as the dominant ones in our field. (Canagarajah, 2020). Some of these topics are reflected in this Thematic Issue of Ñemityra.

The first article titled **Grappling with Power and Privilege in the United States**. Housel talks about the vital importance for educators to reflect on oppressive dynamics and how they manifest and impact professionally. This autoethnographic inquiry focuses on the prevalence of racism and sexism in American society.

Another critical issue in ELT is the still going on discussion between native and non-native speakers of English. The article focuses on the complexities of identity development through language and agency. In their article: **To be the person who is not the native speaker**, Steffanell and Méndez-Rivera discuss intercultural communicative competence as a goal for cross-cultural experiences in EFL. This topic has increased its complexity as a result of critical considerations on interculturality and language learning.

Naturally, gender and gender roles emerged in this thematic issue. In their article: **The emotional journey of female novice researchers in Mexico**, Salas and Flores, aboard the social-emotional aspects of female novice researchers. The article presents the findings of a qualitative narrative inquiry that explored the emotional landscape of a group of Mexican female language teachers who were entering the field of research. The transition from teaching

to research involves a process of insights and awareness of the factors that affect the emotional status of female novice researchers.

Innovative methodologies make students take agency on their own learning. In their article: **Student task engagement in remote language learning during the pandemic**, González Muñoz and Canese explore a critical time and its effects on young students. However, their results indicated that having well-defined perspectives and the development of several strategies, teachers could promote language task engagement during remote instructions.

Finally, as a reminder that English has been considered as a lingua franca and may serve as a uniting element among different life perspectives. Aldana presents her powerful article: **Amplifying English Language Teachers' in-betweenness of their experiences in peace construction**, which makes readers reflect on the wide scope that ELT can offer not only within, but beyond the classroom. Aldana's inquiry approached English language teachers' experiences in peace construction from diverse Colombian territories where dehumanizing practices prevail. ELT is then, an effort to recognize language as a tool for reconciliation, understanding, and conflict resolution. Through language education, the members of the ELT community aim to cultivate empathy and promote peaceful coexistence.

We invite readers to join us on this intellectual journey as we explore these critical issues, by implementing more inclusive and harmonious practices through the transformative power of English Language Teaching.

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A Grappling with power and privilege in the United States: One queer TESOL professional's autoethnographic inquiry

Lidiando con el poder y el privilegio en los Estados Unidos:
la investigación autoetnográfica de un profesional
queer de TESOL

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ABSTRACT

Previous research, including the author's own, has affirmed the presence of oppressive dynamics throughout the American education system, including adult English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. Yet, addressing these dynamics in classroom instruction and program administration is relatively absent in preservice preparation programs and continuous professional development for educational professionals. Similarly, the vital importance for educators to reflect on these oppressive dynamics and explore how they might manifest within themselves and impact them professionally has also been identified. Inspired by Gerald (2022), the author embarked on an autoethnographic inquiry that focused on oppressive dynamics based on their prevalence in American society (racism and sexism) and their personal relevance (homo- and transphobia). Critical race and intersectionality theories were the conceptual frameworks used for this investigation, including the personal and professional impact on the author/research subject and their presence among participants in the research he has conducted. The goal was to scrutinize the context of instruction (i.e., American history, society, and culture), to share the author's reckoning with these dynamics, including power and privilege, and to prompt other educators to make similar introspective journeys. Limitations and areas for future study, including inquiries in other countries/contexts, were also discussed.

Keywords: autoethnography; oppressive dynamics; privilege; ESOL; critical reflection.

RESUMEN

Investigaciones anteriores, incluidas las del propio autor, han confirmado la presencia de dinámicas opresivas en todo el sistema educativo estadounidense, incluyendo los programas de inglés para adultos hablantes de otros idiomas (ESOL, por sus siglas en inglés). Sin embargo, abordar estas dinámicas en la instrucción en el aula y en la administración de programas está relativamente ausente en los programas de preparación previos al servicio y en el desarrollo profesional continuo para los profesionales de la educación. De manera similar, también se ha identificado la importancia vital de que los educadores reflexionen sobre estas dinámicas opresivas y exploren cómo pueden manifestarse dentro de ellos mismos y afectarlos profesionalmente. Inspirado por Gerald (2022), el autor se embarcó en una investigación autoetnográfica que se centró en las dinámicas opresivas basadas en su prevalencia en la sociedad estadounidense (racismo y sexismo) y su relevancia personal (homo y transfobia). Las teorías críticas de la raza y la interseccionalidad fueron los marcos conceptuales utilizados para esta investigación,

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incluyendo el impacto personal y profesional en el autor/sujeto de investigación y su presencia entre los participantes en la investigación que ha realizado. El objetivo era escudriñar el contexto de la instrucción (es decir, la historia, la sociedad y la cultura estadounidenses), compartir el ajuste de cuentas del autor con estas dinámicas, incluyendo el poder y el privilegio, y provocar que otros educadores realicen viajes introspectivos similares. También se discutieron las limitaciones y áreas para futuros estudios, incluyendo investigaciones en otros países/contextos.

Palabras clave: autoetnografía; dinámicas opresivas; privilegio; ESOL; reflexión crítica.

Introduction

For decades, human service professionals, including educators of adults, have been encouraged to reflect upon our practice, grapple with longstanding values and beliefs, and strive to become “reflective in action” (Schön, 1983), which means being proactive in addressing issues and dynamics that arise within ourselves and with our clients or students “in the moment.” Many (Brookfield, 2017; Cranton, 1996; Farrell, 2012; Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1991) have argued that this self-reflection for educators should be initiated during our preservice preparation and nurtured and refined throughout our professional careers. Beyond competence in pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), which means cultivating the ability to present academic discipline or linguistic content in comprehensible ways to students, teaching context is equally crucial for educators to adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of our students most effectively (Grossman, 1990), including implementing culturally sustaining, trauma-responsive, and decolonized pedagogies (Gay, 2002; Gross, 2020; Guy, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Martin, et al., 2017; Paris and Alim, 2017). Since educational practices and policies, including instruction, are context-dependent, educators in the United States of America must also contend with the complex interplay of historical, societal, and social realities that have become systemic and institutionalized within educational settings. For example, oppressive dynamics, like racism, gender bias, and homophobia, are embedded in Pre-K through postsecondary education in the United States, including adult English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs and classrooms (Housel, 2022a, 2023).

The European conquest of the Western Hemisphere, particularly in the United States of America, and its accompanying genocide of indigenous peoples, its chattel slavery of Africans, and its subjugation of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Latinx peoples have fueled European and American economies for centuries. Many (Gerald, 2022; Kendi, 2019; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Roy, 2018) have argued that the United States has never adequately acknowledged nor reckoned with this racialized past. These longstanding acts of violence and oppression, often called domestic terrorism, are perhaps best exemplified by the barbarism inherent in the lynching, mass shootings, and police brutality and murders that continue to plague our white supremacist society in the 21st century. Gerald (2022) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have posited that racism, capitalism, and property ownership are interconnected. Similar assertions could easily apply to other intersecting oppressive dynamics, like sexism, xenophobia, and homo- and transphobia, that also intentionally marginalize groups of people from economic opportunity, social mobility, and generational wealth. Thus, defining, regulating, and owning property have been central features of power dynamics, including oppression and subjugation, in the United States. Related to education, intellectual “property” and literacy have also been leveraged as tools of subjugation and disenfranchisement. For example, teaching a slave to read was illegal and inequities in educational funding between predominantly white school districts and those populated with minoritized children remains true to this day. For Lawrence (1987), most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator or the people who enjoy privileged positions in a society. Ultimately, dominant

groups (e.g., white, male, cis-gender, heterosexual, propertied/monied) rationalize and justify their privilege by constructing narratives that require little, if any, self-examination, or behavioral change (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Although I am addressing dynamics unique to the United States, social hierarchies and oppressive dynamics unfortunately exist in all countries and cultures in the world.

Kendi (2019), Roy (2018), and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have argued that struggling with and confronting oppressive dynamics and power and privilege is crucial if this cycle of oppression, subjugation, and domination is ever going to change. As my own research has attested (Housel, 2022a, 2023), every educational professional must make a commitment to this painful process of personal introspection if we ever hope that authentic and lasting individual and societal learning and transformation can occur (Roy, 2018). Inspired by the autoethnographic and narrative technique employed by Gerald (2022), I will “practice what I preach” by becoming the “research subject” of this autoethnographic inquiry. I will confront and grapple with the oppressive dynamics I have encountered in my life and work, including the power and privilege I have enjoyed within American society, as well as share what has been revealed by participants in my previous research studies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this autoethnographic inquiry:

- 1) How have I personally experienced and internalized the oppressive dynamics under study as they are manifest in the United States?
- 2) To what degree have I witnessed or experienced the oppressive dynamics under study in work settings in the United States?
- 3) What have participants in my previous research shared about experiencing the oppressive dynamics under study?

Conceptual Framework

Aligned with Housel (2023), critical race and intersectionality theories were the conceptual frameworks for this study. Critical race theory (CRT) initially investigated the impact of laws inspired by the Civil Rights movement (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), encompassing a “radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms” (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Over time, CRT has expanded beyond explorations of race and racism to include the examination of other oppressive dynamics, like gender bias and homophobia, within American society and its legal system. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced CRT into Pre-K through 12 educational settings in the United States to investigate the institutionalized racism experienced by Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) children while Closson (2010) supported its use in adult education as well. Ladson-Billings (1998) then advocated for instructors, largely white, to grapple with the oppressive beliefs imbedded in their internalized sense of power and privilege prior to working with BIPOC students.

As an outgrowth of CRT, intersectionality investigates how “intersecting power relations” and oppressive dynamics are “interrelated” and “mutually shape one another” in ways that create “intersecting conditions of subordination” (La Barbera, 2013, 189) or multiple dimensions of disempowerment (Crenshaw, 1991). For example, in working with adult, emergent bi/multilingual learners (EBLs) in the United States or elsewhere, any overarching anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobia that may have been internalized can be exacerbated

by racism, linguicism, and gender oppression, which might be further complicated by homophobia and classism. These interrelated dynamics can have a synergistic impact that could further oppress and disempower the immigrant students that I work with in adult ESOL programs or thwart my ability to be an effective and transformative educator. Consequently, CRT and intersectionality theories were appropriate lenses through which to begin this self-assessment of my own internalized oppressive dynamics, as well as my power and privilege, in the context of my current work in adult ESOL classrooms and programs in the United States.

Methodology

The justification of autoethnography as the methodological framework for this study is discussed below. Similarly, as the lone participant in the study, a more detailed statement of my positionality seemed warranted.

Methodological Framework

Hayano (1979) is generally credited with originating the term *autoethnography* to describe when anthropologists (and subsequently other social scientists, including educational researchers) study their own cultures and contexts. For Poulos (2021, pp. 4-5), autoethnography is a qualitative research method that “attempts to recenter the researcher’s experience as vital...to the research process.” In autoethnographic inquiry, the researcher studies their “own experiences” and “the flow of thoughts and meanings that [they] have in their immediate situation” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 636), which, for pioneers in the field, Ellis and Bochner (2000), ultimately requires displaying “multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (p. 739). Fundamentally, autoethnographers “seek to flesh out the lived, embodied experiences of the researcher inhabiting human social-cultural spaces” (Poulos, 2021, p. 10) where scrutinizing the historical, sociological, and political aspects of the culture ultimately demands confronting oneself. In this study, I conducted what Hager (2022, p. 71) might call a “self-reflective investigation of [my] experience within a particular societal context” and “interrogated that experience relative to specific societal norms” or what Adams et al. (2021) called the “macro” problems of institutionalized and systemic oppression endemic in the United States, including white supremacy.

In most qualitative research, the *etic* (outsider’s) perspective provides a critical degree of “distance” and “detachment” from the research participants and allows for “higher” levels of “conceptual analysis and abstraction” (Patton, 2015, p. 101). For decades, critics have argued that the *emic* (insider) viewpoint can blur the indispensable distinction between research and “literary writing” or prompt “rampant subjectivism” (Crotty, 1998, p. 48). Others (e.g., Richardson, 2000), on the other hand, have viewed the *emic* position as an authentic interweaving of the human, creative, and critical elements of research. Given the vulnerability and potential discomfort inherent in grappling with internalized power, privilege, and oppression (Roy, 2018), including the rigor required for an unwavering, lifelong commitment to such critical introspection (Kendi, 2019), autoethnography, coupled with CRT and intersectionality theory, proved the most fitting methodological approach and conceptual lenses for this study.

Participant

For an autoethnographic inquiry, the usual positionality statement common in qualitative research needs to be expanded. As the author/research subject, I will write in the first person and defy customary conventions by not capitalizing white as a race throughout this manuscript. I was born, raised, and have lived my entire life in the United States, but I have had the good fortune of extensive international travel. I grew up in an overwhelmingly white and segregated suburb in the Midwest, with a handful of families of color. In 1986, I moved to a large metropolitan area in the Northeast for graduate school and have lived in that highly diverse and cosmopolitan environment ever since. I self-identify as a 62-year-old, white, gay, middle-class, cis-male who is free of known learning dis/abilities or challenges. Since my social work training and journey as an anti-racist/pro-feminist/multicultural activist began decades ago, I have remained on a lifelong quest of unpacking my multiple areas of privilege. I have been a licensed social worker for 35 years and have worked within the field of adult literacy, primarily with adult EBLs in postsecondary settings, as an instructor, counselor, and administrator for 23 years. My extensive work with immigrants to the United States, my international travel, my continued friendships with people around the world, and my unique professional journey have all informed the perspectives shared in the findings of this study.

Findings

Although I could have investigated all the oppressive dynamics manifest in American society, I chose to focus on those that, in my opinion, are most pernicious (e.g., racism and sexism) and most personally relevant (e.g., homo- and transphobia).

Race and Racism

Although intersectionality typically conveys the synergistic effects when one is confronted with multiple oppressive dynamics simultaneously, particularly their cumulative adverse impacts on the lives and functioning of oppressed peoples (Crenshaw, 1991; La Barbera, 2013), I would argue that dynamics of power and privilege when compounded have the opposite impact and yield heightened access to power, privilege, and needed resources. My realities as a white, middle-class, cis-male triple my advantage in a society whose foundation is white supremacy, thus inherently racist, and that discriminates against and oppresses women, those with “non-traditional” or “unconventional” gender expression, and the poor and economically dispossessed regardless of race or gender. I am largely the default for whom enhanced access is granted in the United States, with few, if any, obstacles that others typically encounter.

Personal experiences of race and racism

As DiAngelo (2018) asserted, I have never been forced to see myself in racialized terms because my race lies at the top of the societal hierarchy and never harmed me socially nor excluded me from receiving or achieving what I wanted and needed. After all, race and white supremacy are social constructs that were invented centuries ago by Europeans to justify colonialization, chattel slavery, and other forms of economic exploitation of non-white, including indigenous, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latinx peoples (Gerald, 2022). Like most white Americans, I had to be taught racism and my lessons have been consistent and ubiquitous. I sense that most Americans conceptualize racist individuals, especially anti-Black racists, as those waving Confederate flags, wearing white hoods, burning effigies, or spouting racist rhetoric or tropes on social media. I believe that racist beliefs and ideology, however, are much

more insidious and subtle. In my childhood, for example, “Cowboy and Indian” movies and television programs “justified” the decimation of indigenous people and the elimination of their languages and cultures because they threatened our white supremacy and Manifest Destiny, yet the “noble savage” stereotype was manipulated to promote environmentalism in the 1970s. As a child, I recall my mother referring to our African American mail carrier, Wilson, as “nice for a colored man” or George Jefferson’s strut during the introduction to *The Jefferson’s* as “typical for a colored man.” When my brother and I would misbehave, my father would threaten to move our family to a largely African American neighborhood as a punishment. When my grandmother was placed into assisted living, she would say, “See that nurse over there. Her husband is as Black as the Ace of Spades” or neighbors would refer to the “Zebra couple,” conveying contempt for any white person who would “lower” themselves to be involved in an interracial relationship. Of course, this couple’s biracial children were the first suspects for any misdeed or vandalism done in our community. In my family’s eyes and as sanctioned by a recent ruling by the United States Supreme Court, affirmative action has given undeserved advantages to communities of color while denying whites their usual preferential access and treatment, with no acknowledgement of centuries of systematized exclusion and disenfranchisement of people of color nor the transformative power of diverse thought and experience, especially in higher educational settings. Yet, my family was cordial toward our neighbors who were refugees from the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. As educated professionals, they were the “exceptions,” sharply contrasted to the “communist gooks” that we were fighting in the Vietnam War at the time. In later years, my family was warm and welcoming to any person of color that I brought to their home, but, again, their positive regard for this individual person was never extended to the racialized and minoritized groups of which they were a part.

As a child, I was confused by these racist comments. One of my most indelible memories from childhood is the kindness and empathy that the lone African American girl in my kindergarten class showed towards me while the other kids, all white, bullied and taunted me for crying during the first days of school. For me our mail carrier, Wilson, was kind and gentle period. On network television, I watched *Julia* and saw an African American widow who worked as a nurse, self-sufficient and capable, while remaining a loving and conscientious parent. These counternarratives prompted me to read the book, *Roots*, and watch the mini-series it inspired, though the profound inhumanity of slavery was sanitized to appeal to a more “mainstream” (read white) audience and intentionally decontextualized from the racial upheaval that had characterized the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. After all, for white Americans, slavery, thus systemic racial oppression, had been abolished for more than 100 years. Decades later, Steve McQueen, a British director of African descent, rendered the brutality of slavery in all its graphic, unvarnished detail in *12 Years a Slave*, a portrayal that made an inextricable connection to our current racialized and minoritized realities in the United States indisputable.

Experiences of race and racism in work settings

Despite living in one of the most racially and ethnically diverse and populous cities in the United States, my professional life in the “helping professions” has exemplified our racialized society. Most of my professional colleagues for 35-plus years have been white, and all my immediate supervisors have also been white. My first internship as a graduate social work student was in a day treatment center connected to a state psychiatric hospital. All the patients in the center had been or were currently institutionalized with psychiatric diagnoses. All were also people of color, except one older Jewish woman. All clinical staff members,

except one African American, were white. The racialization of severe psychiatric diagnoses as well as the provision of mental health services in this context was blatant and undeniable. Years later, when I began working in adult ESOL programs, I quickly learned that immigrant students often assume that their instructors will be white and “native speakers” of English, and I have witnessed and learned through my research that instructors of color, especially if their home languages were not English (which is further complicated by linguisticism and xenophobia), are often treated in disrespectful or disparaging ways by students and colleagues.

Previous research findings regarding race and racism

In my research, instructors of color have confirmed my observations and shared that their students have made racist comments directly to them or on instructor evaluations. Colleagues have shunned and ostracized them socially, making for an uncomfortable work environment, or have undermined their work by failing to share materials or resources. Supervisors have been unduly punitive and unfair on evaluations or have used evaluation forms that seem tailored to justify their non-reappointment. Clearly, as a microcosm of American society, racism and racist treatment appears ubiquitous in the field of education and warrants more explicit discussion in preservice preparation and continuous professional development (Housel, 2022a, 2023), including transforming instructors from arbiters of the status quo to agents of needed societal change (Freire, 1970).

Sexism and Gender Bias

Similar to the race and racism section, I will discuss personal experiences, work-related and professional experiences, and examples from previous research in my exploration of sexism and gender bias.

Personal experiences of sexism and gender bias

Since my early childhood, I have struggled against gender stereotyping and strict genderized socialization practices. I have always questioned why boys and men were discouraged from expressing their emotions and condemned for crying, especially in public, all of which felt completely natural to me. My parents were atypical of those in the suburban Midwest in the early-to-mid 1960s and bought me dolls and kitchen sets along with my matchbox cars and Tonka trucks. They nurtured and supported my athleticism through competitive swimming where I broke national age group records, became a high school All-American, and earned an athletic scholarship to college. Yet, despite my athletic prowess, peers still called me a “tomgirl” because I often preferred playing “house” and “dress-up” with girls, which defied the norms related to gender segregation of play and friendship common at that time. I also earned money babysitting, instead of cutting grass, shoveling snow, or delivering newspapers as my older brother did, which was also deemed unconventional. The macho bravado displayed in mainstream media and culture did not feel syntonetic with how I felt comfortable expressing myself as cis-male or being in the world. Fortunately for me, my father and grandfather were gentle, nurturing, and affectionate and provided powerful counterexamples to this unbridled *machismo*. Similarly, I connected with, admired, and ultimately emulated the strength and emotional intelligence demonstrated by the women in my life: my mother, my aunts, my grandmothers, our neighbors. I was grateful that my parents acknowledged and nurtured my androgynous and non-binary proclivities and did not punish me for crying, sharing emotions, nor revealing my true self. Their unwavering love, support,

and acceptance ultimately gave me the confidence and courage to “come out” as gay in 1981 and to live my truth, personally and professionally, ever since.

My own struggles against gender stereotyping have not prevented me, however, from embracing my cis-male privilege and internalizing sexist beliefs and language. I remember being reprimanded by a friend in college for referring to adult women as “girls,” which infantilized them and diminished their strength, power, and capabilities as adults and peers. When I wish to curse another person, a sexist epithet is often the first that comes to mind. In American society, saying a man’s behavior or demeanor is like a woman’s or calling him a genderized slur is considered the worse insult possible. Although my chosen professions are predominated by women, leadership and other positions of power are often occupied by men, usually white men (again, the compounded privilege afforded by race and cisgender). Based on outdated myths and stereotypes, women are often not perceived as leaders in the United States.

Experiences of sexism and gender bias in work settings

According to recent United States Census Bureau data (2022), women in America still earn lower salaries and hourly wages than men, and the pay gap widens with age (the combined impact of sexism, ageism, and classism). This gender pay gap is slowly narrowing, however, for younger women with higher levels of education who enter occupations that have been “traditionally dominated by men.” Maternity leave is also not mandated by federal law and, when offered, tends to be shorter in duration than in other Western countries. Given the adjunct nature of work in adult educational settings (Housel, 2022b), women are often reliant on their spouses or domestic partners for health insurance and other benefits because they do not teach enough hours at any singular setting to earn such benefits.

Previous research findings regarding sexism and gender bias

In findings from my previous research, female participants have stated they have felt diminished by their male supervisors, especially during the performance evaluation process or if they attempted to introduce innovative andragogy into their adult ESOL classrooms. They have also overheard sexist comments made between male students and their female classmates, including some having blatant sexual overtures. They opined that many immigrant men who are recent arrivals often do not understand how their flirtatious behavior might be considered inappropriate or sexually harassing in an American educational and cultural context, including directing such comments toward female instructors. In other cases, gender oppression has gotten complicated by racism, ageism, linguicism, and xenophobia where African American female instructors have felt multiply oppressed and where immigrant female instructors have been discounted by students, superiors, and colleagues because of their accents (linguicism) and their “third world” countries of origin (xenophobia and white supremacy). Aligned with Stojanović (2022), research participants who are younger female instructors have articulated feeling infantilized and diminished by older, especially male, supervisors, colleagues, and students. Similarly, dynamics of sexism and gender oppression are often considered “taboo” subjects to address in preservice preparation, continuous professional development, and classroom instruction (Housel, 2022a, 2023), which is telling in a field predominated by women.

Homo- and Transphobia

Of the oppressive dynamics explored in this study, heterosexism and homophobia are the ones that I have confronted most directly in my personal and professional lives as well as the ones that I have internalized most profoundly. As a research participant shared (Housel, 2023), heterosexism is not only a societal norm and expectation globally, but homosexuality is a punishable crime in many countries as well as forbidden in many religious belief systems, especially religious orthodoxies, and described as “deviant,” “immoral,” and “sinful.” If you are gay, you just “haven’t met the right woman yet” or “the right man” if you are a lesbian as if one’s sexual and affectional orientation could change so easily. Homosexuality was only removed from the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973 through queer activism, but its perception as a “sickness,” “perversion,” or “psychopathology” has lingered until today. Throughout history, homosexuality has been criminalized, and homosexuals imprisoned (e.g., Oscar Wilde and countless others) or institutionalized, enduring lobotomies, electro-shock therapies, and other tortures under the guise of medical treatment and cure. Conversion therapies have remained so prevalent and damaging that they have been outlawed in many states in America. Only recently have same-sex marriages been codified into law in the United States as have gender-affirming surgeries, changing official documentation, like birth certificates, and using the bathroom aligned with one’s gender identity, but many states have recently reversed these trans-affirming advances. As often happens, with every human and civil rights victory that minoritized groups experience, there is reactionary backlash. Just as the end of slavery brought the Jim Crow Laws, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the anti-miscegenation laws, and widespread lynching of African Americans, the same degree of domestic terrorism has manifest with anti-queer violence and discrimination, often through legislation at the state level, as well as with mass shootings in queer bars (e.g., Orlando and Colorado Springs), protests against “drag queen” story hours in public libraries and burning pride flags in New York City, and the widespread, often unpublicized, murders of transgender women, especially trans-women of color (the intersectionality of gender oppression, racism, and transphobia).

Personal experiences of homo- and transphobia

Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s in suburban America, there were no role models for queer children like me coming of age. I remember that I initially bristled at the word “queer” when it became a term of empowerment with the offshoot of Act Up called Queer Nation in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Much like the painful history surrounding the “n” word in African American culture, queer was used to debase and degrade homosexuals and incite homophobic intimidation and violence. In the hopes of being more inclusive of all people grappling with or uncertain about their sexual orientation and gender identity as well as our supporters, the alphabet soup of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or allies, plus others who feel comfortable under this inclusive umbrella) is more easily encapsulated as “queer” for me. Even the hallowed halls of academia, infamous for their traditional views and institutionalized *isms*, now offer coursework in Queer Studies. Much has changed in my lifetime, but much remains to be accomplished before equity and equality are experienced by all minoritized people, including queer folks.

Experiences of homo- and transphobia in work settings

Pharr (1988) was on the cutting edge of exploring how multiple oppressive dynamics (intersectionality), especially economic disenfranchisement and exploitation, disproportionately impacted women and were foundational underpinnings of the patriarchy to keep women marginalized as “second class citizens,” especially in work settings. Embracing intersectionality, she characterized the third wave of the women’s movement as “multi-racial and multi-issued” with the goal of transforming the world for all oppressed peoples (“we won’t get there until everyone gets there”). Like Chesler (2018), she connected the mental health pathology and homophobic religious beliefs mentioned above to the “sexism that permeates religious and psychiatric history.” Finally, she asserted that “without the existence of sexism, there would be no homophobia” (Pharr, 1988, p. 26) because, as women, lesbian couples are doubly oppressed by sexist beliefs. In a heterosexual model, gay men assume the role of women by developing intimate relationships with men. I would extend Pharr’s argument by adding that, without sexism, there would also be no transphobia because trans-people defy traditional, binary, and sexist expressions of gender identity and expression. As mentioned above, homo- and transphobia can manifest in underground employment through commercial sex work, underemployment based on earned educational credentials or life experience, unequal pay and access to leadership roles through promotions as well as homo- and transphobic taunts and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Previous research findings regarding homo- and transphobia

Not surprisingly, my research participants have not freely volunteered anything related to queerness or homo- or transphobia unless asked directly. When queried, participants stated that, unlike race or gender, queerness in all its varieties and sexuality in general were “taboo” subjects in classroom discussions and condemned by program administrators. Rarely, if ever, were these issues addressed in preservice preparation or continuous professional development (Housel, 2022a). Although there are many “queer” educators, discussions of queerness, homophobia, and transphobia are typically relegated to “special interest” groups in professional organizations and conferences where like-minded people affirm the importance of their work and struggles but the larger membership is not challenged to examine their own internalized homo- and transphobia. I know that my journey as a cis-gay man has been fundamentally different and less complicated from what lesbians, trans, and nonbinary people have endured because of other complicating oppressive dynamics. In my social work training, I was always told only to share personal information if the disclosure would have “therapeutic value” for my clients. Perhaps this training has made me more reticent to share my sexual orientation with my students as an educator, especially in postsecondary settings where discussions of anything related to sex could be construed as sexual harassment. Such prohibitions have recently been codified into law in Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” ban in public education. These backlashes and prohibitions notwithstanding, I am still committed to grappling with any gender and trans bias that I have unconsciously internalized. There is no question, however, that I have internalized homophobia and have always been propelled to overachieve to compensate for this “awful, deviant, and sinful” thing that I am. Any criticism or imperfection, especially professionally, brings up this negativity and shame and prompts me to question my competence and ethical standing in a nanosecond. As Kendi (2019) asserted, overcoming internalized bias is a lifelong enterprise.

Discussion and Implications

As the findings of this autoethnographic inquiry attest, intersectionality was an appropriate conceptual lens because exploring various oppressive dynamics in isolation would have proven artificial and, in the end, impossible. As Pharr (1988) asserted, the common threads of these distinct oppressive dynamics share root causes in American society, and ultimately none of us will be truly free until all of us enjoy basic human and civil rights. Despite holding ourselves up as beacons of democratic values and principles, our history and cultural dynamics have been fraught with contradictions. Our Jim Crow laws were the blueprint for South Africa's apartheid, and our miscegenation laws were the foundation for the Nazi's anti-Semitic and racist Nuremberg Laws. Regarding racism specifically, Kozol (1991) asserted decades ago that racialized inequalities persist in the United States because frank discussions of race and racism continue to be muted, discounted, and more recently disparaged as manifestations of "woke" or "cancel" culture. I would contend that the other oppressive dynamics explored in this study have also not been confronted in frank and substantive ways. For example, we must grapple with and reverse the unequal treatment of women, queer people, and those who speak unstandardized or accented English and challenge institutionalized discrimination in our society and its educational system. Although this inquiry is centered in the United States, societal hierarchies and oppressive dynamics exist in different permutations in all countries and are equally worthy of introspection and study.

Ultimately, the goal of this autoethnographic inquiry was to demonstrate one way for educators to initiate more direct and uncensored discussions regarding the complex history of oppressive dynamics present in their own countries by taking the critical first step of consistent self-reflection and reckoning of their impact on their personal and professional lives. Acknowledging our own power, privilege, and the areas we have been oppressed are essential first steps, including not being pigeonholed by these oppressive dynamics. Similarly, we must accept that we might be perpetuating oppressive dynamics and stereotypes in our classrooms, schools, and programs through our words, actions, and especially what we fail to do and commit to making needed changes on an individual level. After all, maintaining the status quo is easier, especially when one is afforded a position of power and privilege (Roy, 2018). In the early stages of my teaching career, I was guilty of these "sins of omission" by overlooking oppressive or disparaging comments made in my classrooms. In my mind, I made the excuse that maintaining harmonious and "pleasant" classroom dynamics was more important. Of course, this rationalization only preserved my own sense of security and comfort at the expense of the integrity and humanity of all my students, sacrificing a more equitable and inclusive classroom in the process. I have since acquired the professional confidence and nurtured the self-awareness to confront oppression and injustice whenever they manifest themselves among students, colleagues, and supervisees. On occasion, I have even summoned the courage to speak truth to power, including superiors. Moving beyond individual responsibility, coordinated collective action is imperative if we ever hope to provide justice to the oppressed, secure basic human rights for everyone, and make equity and authentic inclusion realities in American society, especially within its educational institutions (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).

Limitations and Areas for Future Study

Autoethnographers have historically been challenged by "the widely held belief that introspection and subjectivity have no meaningful role in the work of social scientists" (Bochner and Ellis, 2021, p. 250), including educational researchers. By these more traditional research standards, the most obvious limitation of this study is subjectivity. As cited in Wall

(2008), Bochner (2000) argued that most Postmodernists believe that the methods and procedures employed in both qualitative or quantitative research are inevitably intertwined with the values and subjectivities of the researcher regardless of their purported “objectivity.” Like Bochner, I would argue that there is a degree of subjectivity in all educational research, regardless of how scientific its methodology, because researchers are human beings and influenced by their unique perspectives, social circumstances, and contexts. Personally, I have often wondered why quantitative researchers are not expected to make a positionality statement in their journal articles because statistical analyses can be as prejudiced and manipulated by personal bias as qualitative research can be. Although the “findings” from autoethnographic inquiries might also lack generalizability in the conventional sense (Stojanović, 2022), there is generalizability if the findings resonate with others (Ellis et al., 2011) and, in this case, prompt them to grapple with, confront, and challenge the oppressive dynamics in their lives. Areas for future study could include exploring how these dynamics might be present in other countries and contexts, and how other oppressive dynamics, like classism, ageism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia, are evidenced in American society and elsewhere, present in educational research, and manifest in adult education programs.

Conclusion

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens
can change the world: Indeed, it's
the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

Former President Obama has often referred to our “great experiment in American democracy” because, as a nation and society, we have consistently failed to live up to our democratic ideals. Throughout our complex history, our political will has often vacillated between being more restrictive, intolerant, and dictatorial to more accepting, just, and equitable. We often seem to take one step forward toward a “more perfect union,” then stumble two steps backwards. The seemingly unyielding dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression embedded in the nation-state of the U.S.A. since its inception have perpetuated a culture akin to Orwell’s totalitarian *Animal Farm* where “all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” These inequities and hierarchies are equally present in our educational institutions and programs, Pre-K through postsecondary, including those serving adult EBLs (Housel, 2022a, 2023).

Bochner and Ellis (2021, p. 253) challenged us to achieve needed social changes by first posing the following questions: How can we make life better for everyone and what kind of moral and equitable world can we construct? In our quest to make ourselves and, in turn, our societies better, we must first confront the “pain, suffering, and inequality we find in the world,” then create and sustain just and equitable remedies. The creation of these equitable solutions must begin within ourselves. We must examine our reactions and question whether they would be the same if the person were not a person of color, a woman, or queer or trans. Do we hold racialized and minoritized people to more exacting standards than we do those holding positions of power and privilege? Transforming our words and actions so they become more democratic and equal is a crucial first step in realizing needed societal changes in the United States and elsewhere. The aspiration of this study was to motivate others to embark on similar introspective journeys regarding power, privilege, inequality, and oppression, including their personal and professional impacts. As Freire (1970) would advocate, radical social change

must begin with innovative educational practices that transform this critical consciousness on the individual and group levels into collective, purposeful social action to forge and preserve more compassionate, just, equitable, and democratic societies.

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Tipo: Artículo original - **Sección:** Critical Issues in ELT- Thematic Issue (Dosier)

"To be the person who is not the native speaker". Interculturality as empathy in cross-cultural experiences abroad

"Ser la persona que no es el hablante nativo".
La interculturalidad como empatía en las
experiencias interculturales en el extranjero

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ABSTRACT

While inter/cross-cultural learning continues as a paramount and central topic of discussion in the foreign language teaching, the current debate on intercultural communicative competence as a goal for cross-cultural experiences has gained complexity as a result of critical considerations on interculturality and language learning. Although the literature on intercultural learning is long and verbose within the scope of study-abroad, there is still much to see and explore in the lived experience of sojourners to comprehend intercultural experiences and language learning/teaching practices abroad. This qualitative case study examined 32 students' reflective essays with Atlas.ti for text mining and codification. Results suggest that empathy was the most salient feature to understand language, people, and culture. The lived experience of the person who is not a native speaker helped Lee University students to put themselves in someone else's position. In this vein, the role of language was pivotal to engage in the resignification of differences/similarities between cultures. This study contributes to the growing literature on the power of cross-cultural experiences for internationalization and decolonization.

Keywords: Cross-cultural experience; study-abroad; cultural empathy; interculturality; communicative competence.

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RESUMEN

Si bien el aprendizaje intercultural continúa siendo un tema de discusión primordial en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, el debate actual sobre la competencia comunicativa intercultural como objetivo de estas experiencias ha ganado complejidad a raíz de consideraciones críticas sobre la interculturalidad y el aprendizaje de los idiomas. Aunque la literatura sobre el aprendizaje intercultural es extensa en el ámbito de los estudios en el extranjero y las estancias interculturales, todavía hay mucho que explorar en la experiencia vivida por los viajeros para comprender los espacios interculturales y las prácticas de aprendizaje y enseñanza de una lengua extranjera. Este estudio de caso cualitativo examinó los ensayos reflexivos de 32 estudiantes con Atlas.ti para la minería de textos y la codificación. Los resultados sugieren que la empatía fue la característica más destacada para comprender la lengua, las personas y la cultura. La experiencia de quienes no son hablantes nativos del idioma español ayudó a los estudiantes norteamericanos de la Lee University a posicionarse en el lugar del otro. En este sentido, el papel de la lengua fue fundamental para comprometerse en la resignificación de las diferencias/similitudes entre ambas culturas. Este estudio contribuye a la creciente literatura sobre el poder de las experiencias interculturales para la internacionalización y la descolonización.

Palabras clave: experiencia intercultural; estudios en el extranjero; empatía cultural; interculturalidad; Competencia comunicativa.

Introduction

Cross-cultural sojourns in higher education provide a multidimensional scenario to explore how mobility and transitions across borders inform the political and educational framework in curricula decisions for professional education as well as the ideological load, attributed to otherness, intercultural relations, language, and identity. Although much information about the benefits of cross-cultural experiences and study-abroad sojourns is available to correlate institutional efforts for internationalization (Kinginger and Zhuang (2023), intercultural competence (Chédru and Delhoume, 2023, Qinhui et al., 2023, Coleman et al., 2019), global citizenship (Reiter, 2023; Birindelli, 2023; Appe et al., 2016), language learning and practice (Steele et al., 2017), not much has been studied from a bottom-up perspective. The bottom-up perspective demonstrates the lived experiences of the sojourners and provides elements to contest curricular ideological loads and the real impact of cross-cultural experiences on students. Some critical studies have noticed that mainstream curricular approaches towards these sojourns are openly depoliticized. Some of them continue reproducing a vision of otherness and interculturality as exotic objects to be recognized to affirm colonial representations (Stein and McCartney, 2021; Smolcic and Martin, 2019; Soto and Méndez, 2019). In recognition of this serious criticism, we must ensure that universities and programs that have included these sojourns as part of their curriculum understand what they offer and what the students bring in order to make curricula-informed decisions.

This qualitative study examined the lived experiences of 32 Lee University (a Christian affiliated institution located in Cleveland, TN) students who have travelled to Colombia, South America as part of the Global Perspective Program organized by the Spanish Department. This study analysed the views and perceptions of Spanish majors and minors on their short-term cultural experience in Latin America to discuss interculturality as empathy among other relations to language usage and learning that emerged from data analysis. In doing so, researchers examined students' personal and critical narratives of the experience of being a non-native Spanish speaker; as well as the role of social interaction and communication to develop a sense of mutual cultural understanding.

Based on the review of similar research works, in which short-term trips have been ascribed to the most general scope of study abroad research domains (Barkhuizen, 2022; Nelson et al., 2021; Dutkiewicz et al., 2020), it is important to clarify that this Short-Term Cross-Cultural Experience (STCCE henceforth) in Colombia grants 7 academic credits. The

cross-cultural experience under examination on this paper is not arranged into a formal study format. By the same token, there are study-abroad experiences openly designed to embrace empathy and engagement (Cooper, Dellicarpini et al., 2021; Mapes, 2020; Andawi et al., 2020) to foster intercultural competence but little has been said about the lived-experience of American students to inform changes in attitudes in relation to the Other.

This study was launched through the initiative of the first author, who has organized this cross-cultural experience for over ten years at Lee University. The second author of this article has closely accompanied some of the cross-cultural experiences through teaching and proficiency-led activities. Both authors as language professors considered the importance of bringing to the surface answers to questions such as these: What do Lee University Students' lived experience demonstrate about the benefits of the program? How do their views of themselves and others inform interculturality? How does the STCCE affect them as English speakers and Spanish learners? Or more precisely, does their position as native English speakers reinforce the mainstream vision of interculturality?

Trends on multi/inter/cross culturalism in study abroad for language learning

When it comes to short-term abroad experiences in higher education, the meanings and senses given to multi-inter-cross prefixes continue to enlarge the debate on differential values to include the treatment of other cultures and languages. While many researchers have investigated cross-cultural, intercultural, and multicultural communication, it seems that there have been numerous conflicts understanding the terms as the conceptualization of trends advances quickly, leaving mere room for curriculum and policy updating contrasting theory and practice on the matter. In fact, the appropriation of multi/inter/cross terms in short-term abroad experiences in the US without critical elaborations causes a mare magnum of poor and weak definitions. We consider that the remaking of the concepts informed by sojourners' real lived experiences would inform better contact between cultures.

Trends on short-term abroad experiences for language learning, on one hand, highlight usage-based approaches to cast light upon exposure to and interaction with the target language McCormick (2018) and the paths of acquisition and language change (Geeslin and Garrett, 2018). Furthermore, positive impact on phonetics and phonology, intonation, fluency, lexical and vocabulary acquisition (Sanz and Morales-Front, 2018), among other aspects, contribute to the influential development of the applied linguistic perspective. Although studies exploring returning students' intercultural competence are scarce (Peckenpaugh, 2018), some of them provide positive insight how the students perceived host and own culture, cultural differences, and personal growth (Maharaja, 2018). Others claim that although these programs are beneficial to students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, they do not necessarily help to develop deeper levels of intercultural competence (Terzuolo, 2016; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). Trends on study-abroad also notice identity-related challenges for sojourners while being exposed to other languages and cultures, bringing to the surface topics related to struggles, agency, and identity work to position themselves in the host culture (Tulloch, 2018).

Although the previous research about the benefits and the challenges of being abroad in immersive cross-cultural experiences is extensive, there is still a need for more research contesting the alleged privilege position of all American students while being abroad to relate to other cultures, other languages, and other people. By the same token, more discussion about the implications of embracing inter/multi/cross-culturalism is needed to better understand the epistemological and conceptual opinions on the matter. It is an occasion for inquiring or

investigating whether colonial takes on cross-cultural experiences are still perpetuating culturally imperialistic practices in which hierarchies and the white saviour complex prevail (Ashdown and Buck, 2018; Nordmeyer, Bedera and Teig, 2016; Aronson, 2017).

Regarding cross-cultural experiences, the discussion begins by describing the organization of multi-cross-intercultural experiences abroad and the views on language and culture. This reveals the kind of problematization that the experience of being abroad renders to categories such as culture, race, politics, language, and history in the definition of one's identity as a native or a foreigner (Anderson-Levitt, 2012; Lentz, 2017; McIntosh et al, 2002). As stated by Hoff (2020), the problematization of culture and identity are pivotal to connect and correct the practices of “misrepresenting contemporary patterns of life and restricting the roles multicultural and [intercultural] individuals are allowed to adopt in the language learning experience” (p.58).

In the case of multicultural experiences abroad, one of the key terms for advertisement is diversity. The promotion of multicultural cities in which hundreds of languages are spoken and people from different backgrounds create a multicultural society are some elements used to invite US students to experience different cultures. Nevertheless, knowing the many cultures are integrated does not mean that interactions occur. The fact that we recognize the presence of many cultures in one place does not define interaction as such, much less linking and contextual situations where the shared knowledge is in place. This prevents multicultural communication in learning from one another. The interactions that inhibit a deep learning among them. Even though the multiculturalism theory expresses itself as a diversity and emphasizes multicultural alignments such as equal rights, different perceptions on others and among others, it is not always the intention to overcome racial and cultural conflicts daily.

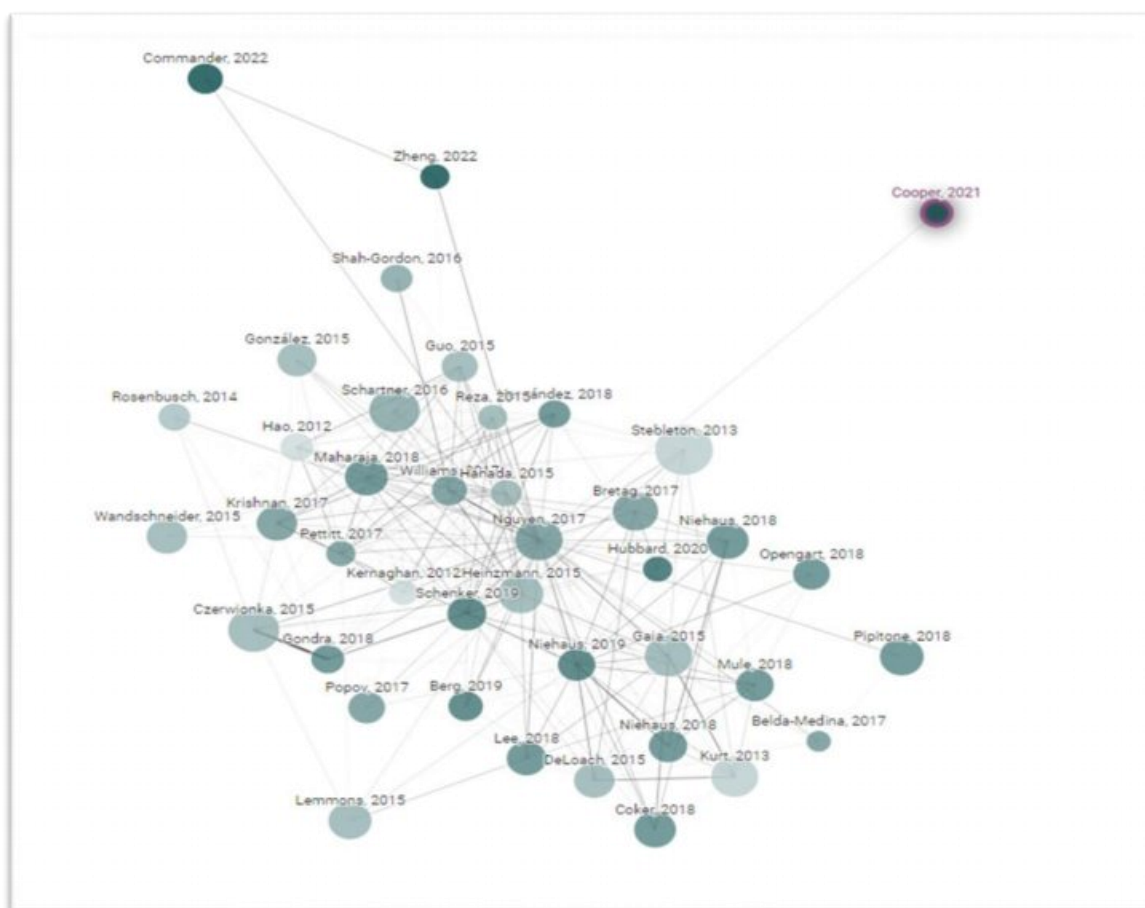
Due to the latter criticism, other higher education programs have adopted terms like cross-cultural and intercultural experiences. The first implies the recognition and the coexistence of cultural production on other peoples and the importance of the community-based side that shares a common language that has different worldviews. Thus, there is still a lack of full cultural immersion in the target culture (Doerr, 2022). Individuals are deeply aware of the others and sense the potential learning among them (Bican, 2021; Aski et. al., 2020; Diaconu et al., 2018; Hull, 2018). On the contrary, what we intentionally do in the Lee University Spanish Program promotes interculturality as a useful analytic concept because both cultures (US culture and target culture) intermingle potentially with one another. By acquiring this close relationship, both cultural worldviews neglect prejudice, cultural misunderstandings, and provoke stability yet a coherent embrace -beyond tolerance- of social behaviour and full acknowledgement of the other as a result of the interculturality as empathy in what we state as cross-cultural competencies.

While in the multicultural and cross-cultural research one can find exposure to culture, comparative analysis and anchored changes are not necessarily observed as in interculturality as empathy. Consequently, in the interculturality as empathy the culture concept is central and carefully tied to beliefs, deep meaning and transformative power over misconceptions based on upbringing, ideology, and history. As such, interculturality as empathy is defined by the full immersion in the target culture, embodying the flesh and operational system of languages, and a mission mindset translated in educational and personal reforms for the students to become global citizens.

Interculturality as empathy

Short-term study abroad has identified cultural empathy as a key component of intercultural communication skills (Cooper, Dellicarpini et al., 2021; Mapes, 2020; Andawi et al., 2020; Honglin Zhu, 2011). As it is shown in figure 1, between 2023 and 2013 a significant number of works focusing on different aspects such as internationalization, effective short-term abroad programs, and interaction in language showed empathy as an emergent feature of students’ lived experiences. In so doing, empathy is connected to sensitivity, awareness of sojourners’ own identity, and intensity/quality of interactions with L2 speakers (Hernández, 2018). When it comes to the senses given to empathy, little conceptualization is found.

Figure 1. Connected Papers on Study Abroad and Empathy



According to the literature, there is a difference between cultural awareness and cultural empathy (Zhu, 2011, Cooper, 2021). Intercultural awareness involves the ability to stand back from our point and become aware of not only our own cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions but also those of other cultures. The fact one observes our own world through others’ eyes is significant as a primary data source. Zhu continues arguing that intercultural awareness lacks a more in-depth approach, primarily because it does not touch base on the most unfamiliar issues of other cultures and how the political and societal attitudes influence each other’s culture.

From our understanding, and Zhu’s interests, intercultural empathy conveys “the prerequisite and assurance for effective cultural communication” (p. 117). In this sense, there is a considerable ethical and political importance to how we depict the target culture with values that do not belong to ours and therefore making it possible to understand the downfalls and

struggles of the studied culture (Soto and Méndez, 2022). In other words, the shift consists in moving from an “ego-logical (individualistic)” to an “eco-logical (contextual and distributed)” position of oneself. One in which empathy is not ‘in’ the individual but is a product of the quality of social interaction, and therefore is ‘in’ the social exchange (Eichbaum et al. 2022)

Cross-cultural experience project background

The Lee University Spanish program requires cultural knowledge to acquire a language and an intercultural approach. Students studying for a major in Spanish are required to have six credits in the target language from a Spanish-speaking country. The program not only comprises Spanish majors, but also a substantial number of Spanish minors or students who are interested in pursuing electives after the eligibility process, which is currently at the intermediate level. The first Colombia trip was organized in 2011. Activities for interaction and attendance at academic and cultural events, among others, are organized to guarantee exposure to the Spanish language. Moreover, students are hosted by families whose English skills are below zero, which has helped them better understand the similarities and differences between the target culture and language and their system of beliefs.

A set of assignments (SPAN 311, SPAN 312, and GNST 215) are conducted in Colombia for 7 credits. Classes are not structured exactly as they would be on the Lee University campus or in a regular semester, but rather are based on daily learning experiences of interacting with the culture of the target language that are brought to attention for a month. One of the Spanish Program's pillars is to embrace cultural differences that foster a new understanding of the academic and what is wrongly called “academic tourism” (Bakir, et al., 2017). The program reports that some of these students have an active agenda for changing the job and study environments in which they are currently developing. Some of them have pursued master's degrees or doctoral programs on Latin America-related issues; others are currently Spanish teachers who have done cross-cultural trips in Colombia and other countries, and the feeling of lifelong connection with the then-host families is an ongoing fellowship.

Among the objectives of the program, we would like to make noticeable these: 1) guide students in an understanding of their Christian values to demonstrate respect for culturally diverse points of view; 2) encourage students to develop the knowledge, understanding, and respect needed to function effectively in a culturally and ethnically diverse nation and world. And, especially, 3) cultivate in students an empathetic understanding of cultures apart from their own.

Methodology

This is a qualitative case study that examined the academic, personal, and social experience of 32 Lee University students' experiences abroad on a short-term cross-cultural trip to Colombia to practice Spanish language. This case study sample as a method “allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” in particular “when how and why questions are posed” (Yin, R. K. 2018, p.1). As the research questions sought to explain the perceptions gathered by a group of sojourners after living the cross-cultural experience in direct connection to culture and language. The particularity of this approach was oriented to making sense of or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3; Conner, 2017). The academic, personal, and social experiences of the 32 participants were retrieved from reflexive essays, compiled over the last eight years. The essays were catalogued by years, and random samples of those essays from each year were collected to carry out the thematic analysis last year.

Participants

Participants in this case study were 32 Lee University Students enrolled in Spanish learning as a major or as a minor. Of the students, 21 were female and 11 were male. These students decided to select the alternative to travel to Colombia among other Global perspectives options. The vast majority of students from Lee University pay for their own studies with part-time jobs. The youth who participated in this study decided to come to Latin America mainly for budgetary reasons. Others were motivated to come to this South American country by the Colombian nationality of their Spanish professors. All of them were Americans who enrolled at Lee University to study different professions, such as foreign languages, nursing, social work, law, among others. A significant number of students work part-time to earn money to pay for these courses, many of whom live with low to middle class income families.

Instruments

Reflection papers were the main instrument to obtain students' views on the Global Perspective trip as lived experience. These narratives revealed students' views and perceptions, as well as the role of culture and language during and after the trip. These reflective papers were one to two pages in length, clear and easy to read. The longest paper did not exceed 1200 words. Conditions for the writing of this paper were frankness, a high degree of reflectiveness, and personal involvement. We asked students for permission to use their reflective writing for the purposes of this investigation.

Data Collection

Reflective papers were collected over a period of 10 years as part of the final assignment of the cross-cultural experience at the end of terms in years 2011 (3 samples), 2013 (8 samples), 2016 (1 sample), 2017 (4 samples), 2019 (7 samples), 2021 (6 samples), 2022 (3 samples). Paper samples were chosen randomly from a fairly long number of reflective papers, taking into account their length and depth, although this varied significantly from student to student. All this together gathered 32 reflective essays, 67 pages and 22,245 words that were organized in separate files under pseudonyms for ethical reasons and personal privacy.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed following the six-stage data collection and thematic analysis process suggested by Peel (2017). In doing so, *Atlas.ti* as a tool for commenting, labelling, memoing, and coding was useful to consolidate codes and quotations. As a first step, reflective papers were organized in separate files, read, re-read in the light of the main questions being asked in this research, using color-coding to notice recurrent patterns and make sense of data. This facilitated the identification of initial codes that were dispersed throughout the consolidated file. As a second step, once the file was uploaded to *Atlas.ti* as the hermeneutic unit to be analysed, extracts from data were coded, making meaning units visible. In some cases, these codes overlapped with the initial review, and in others these complemented or added new ones. As a fourth step more recurrent and reiterative codes were categorized according to the semantic content of the data project. Based on the codes that reached more density, ground and structure, codes were filtered (step 5) and themes were inferred to build a framework (Peel, 2020) that made the manifestation of interculturality as empathy and as a lived experience visible (see Table 1).

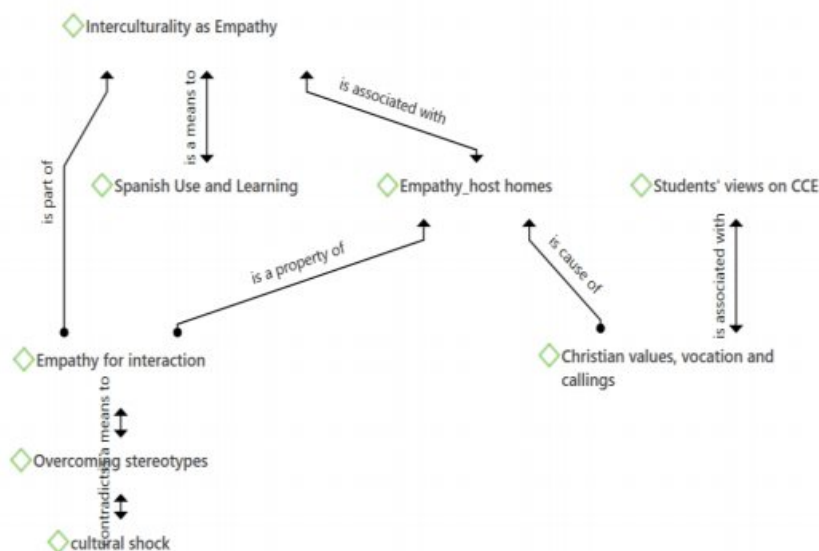
Table 1. Density of Defined Codes for Interculturality as Empathy

Code	Grounded	Density	Code groups
Christian values, vocation and callings	21	2	
cultural shock	8	1	
Empathy for interaction	22	3	Interculturality as empathy
Empathy_host homes	10	3	Interculturality as empathy
Interculturality as Empathy	30	3	Interculturality as empathy
Overcoming stereotypes	6	2	
Spanish Use and Learning	34	1	
Students' views on CCE	30	1	

Note. In Atlas.ti the number behind a code shows the frequency of how many times the code has been applied to the data. The values corresponding to density highlight the extent to which codes are linked to each other.

Due to limited space, our findings and discussion will focus and detail the code group devoted to the theme of interculturality as empathy, in which the Spanish language plays an important role. Figure 2 illustrates the interconnections we established along with a hierarchical view of the scheme.

Figure 2. Mapping of Atlas.ti on Interculturality Interconnections

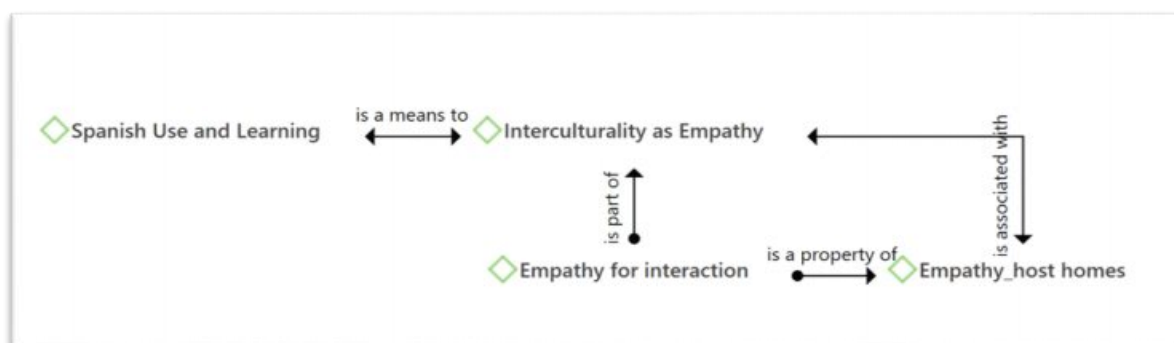


Note. This figure is instrumental to understand the nuances that the theme interculturality as Empathy encompasses. It illustrates, for instance, how learning and using Spanish can be a medium to raise an empathic attitude towards a foreign culture and language. At the same time, it portrays data related to students' personal experiences to overcome stereotypes and cultural shock while interacting with others.

Findings

This case study identified 8 codes to cast light on emerging themes whose density, ground and co-occurrence nurtured and uplifted interculturality (62 quotes) and the role of Spanish learning and Spanish use (34 quotes). In a nutshell: i. Experience of interacting with other countries and cultures (which prompts empathy for interaction as a theme), ii. Living with others (which prompts empathy-host homes) and iii. Putting themselves in others’ shoes (which prompts interculturality as empathy as a theme). According to Peel, K. (2020) analysing thematically allows researchers to “create the rich descriptions that emanate from the data extracts, using the participants’ own words” (p.4). One of the salient themes was interculturality as empathy, in which being the person who is not the native speaker confronted participants with the sense of being in other shoes. Participants were able to connect with people and situations lived in Colombia. Findings will be discussed in detail, noticing the role of Spanish usage and learning (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Spanish Usage Relations



Discussion

In this section, we will discuss main themes, making participants’ voices visible when unpacking interculturality as empathy and its different manifestations. As part of the analysis, some participants’ quotes are brought to light in relation to lived experiences in which the sense of oneself and one’s own culture are confronted to express comparisons, new perspectives, and ways to cope with difference and language proficiency. From a more scientific and epistemological perspective, we learn that the capacity of human beings is shaped by empathy and education (Bell, 2013; Bleakley et al., 2011; Bleakley et al., 2020). In our research, the findings show a solid respect and sensitivity toward other cultures and languages. This indicates that institutional policies for internationalization are not exclusively cemented in economical or extractivism terms. In this way, the experience of travelling from the North to the South seeks to show the potentialities of interculturality for students’ views on language learning and practice.

Participants improved their language proficiency by assuming strong global citizenship and responsibility for others, taking down the wall of superiority as a Northern Hemisphere nation, and giving in to new experiences. Thus, the intercultural experience defines the relevance of cultural sensitivity and understanding linguistic encounters with the host culture. By eliminating the “comfort zone” (where the individuals do not practice or improve their language) and the cultural inequities, the students were able to expand on their intercultural empathy by creating a safe zone of growing recognition and cultural safety. The students licensed themselves to let blocking barriers go away and therefore achieve a more in-depth dimension of foreign language acquisition with quality and accuracy.

Interculturality as empathy

Excerpt 1: Developing my proficiency in Spanish has been another impactful experience during this trip. Not only is it an amazing opportunity to be able to put to use what I've studied for the past several years, speaking Spanish has also provided insight into a culture that is obviously different from mine. Moreover, it is exceptionally humbling to be the person who is not a native speaker. I have lived in the States my whole life where people are almost always expected to know English, even if it is not their first language. I appreciated experiencing the other side of that, because when learning a language, you always need others' assistance, patience, and corrections (Esther, RE008).

The above underlined sentence shows the power of one's words. It is important to note that this quote from Esther inspired the researcher's title for this article. Her capacity to understand the experience of not being a native speaker explains how important is to be immersed in the target culture. As Esther explains, "experiencing the other side"; the side of a minority language speaking group, helped her to appreciate the role of interactants in assisting learners in the activities of daily living with patience and feedback. Here, it is interesting to notice how Esther positioning as a non-native Spanish speaker took her to subvert the colonial representation of English people as native speakers. The way she confronted it made her feel vulnerable and humble. And more importantly, to decide how to act and fight against this colonial mechanism of domination.

The following excerpt (2) also illustrates how empathy implies a full understanding of the other as one who is walking in someone else's shoes. In this regard, "empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions" (Krznicaric, 2014, p. X). In Melissa's case, the sense of empathy for immigrants and their language struggles is visible. Assertively, she took on the humbling role of a simple learner and listener. She linguistically and culturally observes people from the other side, from a perspective of white privilege, positioning herself on the humility and transformation spectrum.

Excerpt 2: As an over-achieving, straight A student, it was jarring to suddenly find myself as one of the least competent Spanish speakers on the trip. It was beyond frustrating to have a desire to engage and have meaningful conversations with the Cota people we encountered and not be able to due to my own lack of Spanish proficiency. This frustration made me extremely empathetic to those who travel/immigrate to America without being able to speak much, if any, English. (Melissa, RE009)

When it comes to confronting one's sense of belonging, Boris (E3) and Duvis (E4) establish strong political and cultural comparisons between Colombia and their own American places. They bring cultural bridges and their locus to Colombia, observing their land through Colombia's eyes. They definitely identify through language and cultural immersion with a resilient and hopeful life in the middle of conflicts, expanding on their own social problems back home. In Duvis' narrative, particularly, she recognizes that in her country there also exists another kind of poverty; not only economic poverty, like in Latin America, but also emotional and internal poverty, over and above the typical power that the United States stands for. It is wrongly observed that those living in the United States are solely full of privileges; this needs to be emphasized at a crucial time when totalizing theories are incapable of seeing North American people's struggles. That is why Duvis sees her country as poor as many areas in

Colombia. By taking this viewpoint, she clearly understands, compares, and assimilates both cultures, as well as intermingles and overlaps concepts, thoughts, sentiments, and emotions.

Excerpt 3: I hope to be able to better address intercultural issues that seem to be in a certain state of conflict, especially in regard to the conflicts between the Hispanic communities and Irish/German communities that have been intermingling these past several decades in my hometown. This experience has shown me that there will be cultural tensions in every place where there is more than one culture, but that there *is* a way to resolve these conflicts. (Boris, RE003)

Excerpt 4: I found myself reflecting on the type of community I live in at home and how my local church could help to improve the quality of life around us. In Colombia, I saw many people begging on the sides of the streets or doing their best to sell us souvenirs so they could make enough money for the day to feed their family. My heart went out to those struggling, to those who not only needed their spiritual and emotional and mental aspects tended to, but their physical needs too. It reminded me of the brokenness and desperation of certain sections of my hometown. Where I live, there are many low-income families. They struggle to even just have enough for their next meal, (DUVIS, RE005)

One of the concepts is eyeing the “other” as part of the learning process. During the Colombia trip, it is crucial to improve not only the Spanish language, but also the understanding of embracing cultures rather than tolerating them. Embracing means accepting and fully comprehending the differences and similarities without trying to change what they perceive as different. Tolerance implies that one has to accept, but one is not concerned about the other people who are slightly or very different from us. It's about developing empathy instead of sympathy for others by recognizing their feelings, discovering new ways to build a welcoming community, and exploring and discovering ideas that provoke thought. This latter idea is strongly connected to Duvis' narrative (E4) but is reassured in Jules' (E5). Jules exemplifies a true embrace of the culture without questioning what he does not understand.

Excerpt 5: Studying at and working with schools in Colombia showed me how even people on the other side of the world without the things we take for granted in the US can be incredibly bright and deserve just as much from the world as we do back home, and even reminded me that often back home there are those who can't get what they need even though they could do incredible things. I saw needs, and many kinds of them. But something else that I find people need is community. To build these people up, show them a friendly face and just talk for a while was an incredible way to show love. To show them that yes, I was from a different place in the world but that it didn't mean I didn't want to understand them. (Jules, RE012)

Many of the essays reflect differences by comparing cultures. Beth (E6) and Susan (E7) clearly state some main characteristics of the so-called “white saviour complex”. Their reviews manifest an empathy that contradicts this syndrome (Ashdown and Buck, 2018; Nordmeyer, Bedera and Teig, 2016; Aronson, 2017). In fact, the way Beth (E6) and Susan (E7) tackle the North American superiority mindset contributes to dealing with it in a different and more positive manner. For instance, ways to achieve progress that differ from the dominant one.

Excerpt 6: This trip taught me that we can learn from other cultures/other countries. I think there is this mindset in North America that because we are a developed country, other countries need our help to make them better...or good. We think that because there are not shiny, silver skyscrapers all over Ecuador or Colombia that

their lifestyle must be lacking and in need of help and improvement. But this is not always the right mindset. Their lifestyle/culture being different from ours does not indicate that it is necessarily lacking. (Beth, RE015)

Excerpt 7: It was interesting to live with Americans in another culture and see the differences before my eyes. No culture is better than another; each culture has value and validity. I think there are a lot of Americans that could learn something from Colombians. Colombian culture is very different than American culture in many ways, but it stretched me in such a good way. For example, something as minimal as slamming a car door has taught me that I take my things for granted. Having a car is so normal to me that I always slam the door, forgetting that my car is a precious gift and that having one is not a necessity. (Susan, RE025)

The significance of Beth and Susan's take on interculturality stresses empathy as a close relationship with someone whose culture and language are different from theirs. But this does not obscure the fact that, irrespective of our cultural background, we as human beings, share a human condition and a broader territory, making us global citizens of the Oikumene (“the inhabited earth that belongs to all”). In this cross-cultural experience, teachers encourage their students to perceive others horizontally and not in a hierarchical way, which has the potential to enhance their social and language skills and impact their views.

Empathy for Interaction

In this section, we would like to draw attention to interaction for communication, in which students' development of intercultural communicative competence (Chédru and Delhoume, 2023, Qinhui et al., 2023; Hoff, 2020; Coleman et al., 2019) is nurtured by empathy and the desire to connect with others to see themselves with new eyes. In doing so, relational connectivity with others is paramount during our trip, as stated by the students below. For them, the process of connectivity causes social interaction, which strongly reduces physical distance and increases not only their language performance, but also the challenges of becoming unique and embracing differences. As Shyla states: “It allowed me to discover parts of myself that I didn't know that I had” (E8). This is only found by reducing the negative effects of cultural shock and turning to alleviate the stress of being known by the Other, helping herself find part of her identity in a foreign land. Something similar is experienced by Maya (E9), whose sense of herself was nurtured by the interaction with people, language, and culture.

Excerpt 8: I feel that my capacity for understanding other people has become bigger. All of this to say, even in a foreign country surrounded by people who did not speak the same language as me or look like me (...) it was a game changer for me. It allowed me to discover parts of myself that I didn't know that I had. (Shyla, RE030)

Excerpt 9: I have now been in Colombia for almost two whole months and could not be happier; the people, the lifestyle, the food, the language, and the experiences have helped shape me into a better person. I also had the opportunity to teach high school English classes for the first 4 weeks I was in Colombia, sing on the worship team, go to prayer nights, and minister to the people here. (Maya, RE017)

As it was previously explained, exposure to and interaction with the target language (McCormick; 2018) and the paths of acquisition and language change (Geeslin and Garrett, 2018) are meaningful components for the positive evaluation of cross-cultural study abroad programs. However, the importance of interaction here relies on the possibilities for identity work beyond language usage. A better understanding of who we are is nurtured by an empathetic relationship with the people of the target language. This reinforces the idea that a sense of internalization in language and culture is mediated by a sense of global citizenship in which differences are welcome.

Spanish use and learning as a means for intercultural empathy

Although previous excerpts are also connected to Spanish use and learning, in this section we want to emphasize the students' self-appraisal of their experience speaking Spanish and the value given to their learning process before, during, and after the trip. Positive impact on Spanish learning validated what McCormick (2018), Sanz and Morales-Front (2018) and Maharaja (2018) have said in relation to language acquisition and personal growth. One salient aspect of this category is the way students refer to their identity work as Spanish learners and the will to speak and connect to unpack what agency in language acquisition entails (Tulloch, 2018). In the case of Dylan (RE006) and Pao (RE010) the importance of conversing with Colombian people was the leitmotif to continue pushing themselves to speak no matter difficulties or mistakes.

My ability to speak Spanish allowed me to communicate bilingually with my students. I could effectively converse with others in the language they spoke best, building relationships and lasting friendships with all those around me. And even if I could not say everything perfectly or if I made frequent mistakes, it meant the world to them that I was at least trying. (Dylan, RE006)

Although it needed a lot of work, and still does, my Spanish was definitely sufficient not only to order food and understand class lectures, but to have thoughtful and personal and even substantially long conversations with people. I talked to everyone - street vendors, my host families, students, my professors - with much less difficulty than I expected. (Pao, RE010)

When students were exposed to Colombians, they realized that sometimes it is not as important what people say, but to understand what they mean. The language counterparts infer information, mediate meaning when students stumble in their own foreign language. This linguistic and cultural game creates a deep bonding and effective communication between the individuals, greatly encouraging communication. As Sojourn activities are thought and planned to immerse students in real interactions the sense of joy and excitement to witness their own skills and competences to speak Spanish and improve it while interacting with locals are aspects that fulfill their expectations (See Lola (RE013) and Santos' excerpts (RE023).

I was pleasantly surprised and overly excited when I learned that I was able to have conversations with natives. Whether it be in their store, on the streets or in the host homes, for the most part, I not only understood them but was able to engage in conversation with them. (Lola, RE013)

Another part that helps with my learning was the interaction with the people of Columbia. Talking to Spanish native speakers help me improve my Spanish. Each day we were put in situations where in which speaking Spanish was necessary. For

example, I remember one day in which my assignment was to look for a Colombian and ask him or her to share some story about the Colombian culture. This meant finding a person that was unknown and start a conversation. The assignment wasn't easy, but it was very helpful in improving my communication skills. Assignments like this one help improve my communication skills in Spanish. (Santo, RE023)

Students' struggles for communication in Spanish are part of the learning process in situ. Although leisure activities are provided, a high percentage of events during the trip have been carefully planned by organizers to enhance students' communication and participation. By the same token, it is also worth noticing the previous excerpts as examples of empathy with the role of English native speakers now assigned to Spanish native speakers. As can be inferred, the use of "nativeness" is positioned in linguistic terms without an emphasis on hierarchies. Yet, the lack of Spanish proficiency was something that some of them experienced, as in Melissa's case (RE009), being themselves positioned as non-native Spanish speakers gave them a new comprehension of immigrants' struggles to speak English in the United States and of their own struggles in the Spanish speaking framework.

Conclusions

The comprehension of interculturality as empathy should be a must in all cross-cultural experiences in US higher education. It is essential that trip directors and faculty participating in cross-cultural journeys provide and expand knowledge beyond content-based classes. In this case, students participate in cultural research associated with numerous activities charged with meaning and ongoing change.

It is a fact that one cannot measure cultural proficiency and explain exactly how much an individual knows about a certain culture. However, we can speak about the intersection of cultures to develop in learners an exchange of knowledge, a certain cultural dimension, and the capacity to understand perspectives comparing theirs and ours when we are exposed to other cultures. To do so, in this research, we intended to address conceptual categories that foster language learning to improve proficiency and culture awareness more aligned to an ethical and relational agenda. That is why one of our main goals in this article is to promote the idea of separating culture and tourism as a top priority. Avoiding the fine and dangerous line caused by other study abroad trips in which Native-Speakerism ideology is politically laden to mark superiority or to embrace the white saviour syndrome.

As shown in this paper, narratives provided by Lee University students summarized acts of empathy and love for the people who continuously struggle to survive in other places. But in doing so, they were able to connect with these situations and cultural differences to narrate similar ones, making explicit nuances and senses that bring meaning to culture and their sense of themselves as global citizens when learning Spanish. For these students, at the end "being a person who is not a native speaker" (with supremacy and privileges) gives them a sense of empathy with the experiences of those who have struggled to learn English. In this respect, empathy invigorates a perception of the self in which there is no place for determinism but for valorising the interaction with Other, the one whom difference makes us a better human being.

The analysis clearly indicated that language carries social and cultural messages that go beyond borders. These boundaries are not only geographical but ideological in the sense of contributing to the construction of a better understanding of (inter)cultural meanings. The bottom-up perspective in this study demonstrates that the lived experiences of the sojourners provided elements to break down curricular ideological loads and evaluate the real impact of

cross-cultural experiences on American students. As it was shown, a more balanced treatment between cultures is a key element to reconsider internationalization practices when it deals with foreign language teaching and learning. The implications of this study will benefit those who design, guide, and promote these programs by decreasing institutional biases in comprehending what these programs entail when a foreign language and culture are closely related to students' life projects.

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The Emotional Journey of Female Novice Researchers in Mexico

El viaje emocional de las
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ABSTRACT

Doing research has become part of language teachers' academic demands in many educational institutions around the world. This article presents the findings of a qualitative narrative inquiry that explored the emotional landscape of a group of Mexican female language teachers who were entering the field of research. The transition from teaching to research involves a process of insights and awareness of the factors that affect the emotional status of female novice researchers. Their narratives evidenced their personal and professional struggles and their emotional labor. The findings reveal a complex interplay of emotions identified through the Pratham Life Skills framework within the social-emotional learning (SEL) approach. The study highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing these emotional facets in the academic career trajectories of female researchers, with the goal of fostering their well-being and a more inclusive and supportive academic environment in the language teaching and learning research field.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning (SEL); female English language teachers; teaching and research; social expectations; teachers and researchers' well-being.

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RESUMEN

Realizar investigaciones se ha convertido en parte de las exigencias académicas de los profesores de idiomas en muchas instituciones educativas alrededor del mundo. Este artículo presenta los hallazgos de una investigación narrativa cualitativa que exploró el panorama emocional de un grupo de profesoras de idiomas mexicanas que se estaban adentrando en el campo de la investigación. La transición de la enseñanza a la investigación implica un proceso de percepciones y conciencia de los factores que afectan el estado emocional de las investigadoras noveles. Sus narrativas evidenciaron sus luchas personales y profesionales, así como su labor emocional. Los hallazgos revelan una compleja interacción de emociones identificadas a través del marco de Habilidades para la Vida de Pratham dentro del enfoque de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés). El estudio destaca la importancia de reconocer y abordar estas facetas emocionales en las trayectorias de la carrera académica de las investigadoras, con el objetivo de fomentar su bienestar y un entorno académico más inclusivo y de apoyo en el campo de la investigación sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de idiomas.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL); profesoras de inglés; enseñanza e investigación; expectativas sociales; bienestar de profesores e investigadores.

Introduction

Research has recently been considered an essential task for teachers besides teaching and pursuing their professional development. However, embarking on a research journey can be challenging for novice researchers. Generally, novice researchers go through the process of writing an M.A. or a PhD thesis which, in the words of Bailey and Corrales (2020), “is considered a rite of passage for those entering the world of research” (p. 1) and helps in creating and enhancing a culture of consuming and conducting research from early stages as Méndez García (2020) affirmed. Therefore, a novice researcher can be described as someone who is either writing a postgraduate thesis or somebody who is committed to start a further career in research. However, for novice female researchers, the research development process might involve a unique set of challenges that trigger their emotions and feelings along with their efforts to do research. This article explores the process of becoming a professional researcher that a group of novice females went through once they made the decision to become researchers. This qualitative narrative study (Bamberg, 2006; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) focuses on the words and stories of a group of female language teachers who decided to continue studying a doctorate program after being in the language classroom for several years.

Academics who opt for a career in research are also willing to take on additional challenges involved, such as presenting at conferences and academic events, accepting publishing demands (Borg, 2013; Hasrati, 2013; Yuan & Lee, 2014), and engaging in the struggle of keeping their status as researchers (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). One option to become researchers for language teachers is to enroll in a postgraduate program (i.e., master’s or Ph.D. programs), either on their own initiative or encouraged or required by personal, professional, or institutional demands. The participants in this study were all English teachers who decided to become researchers and enroll in a doctorate program.

Women form more than three-quarters of the total of teachers around the world, according to World Language Teacher Demographics (n.d.). When it comes to research, however, only one in three researchers is a woman (UNESCO, 2021). The emergence of postgraduate programs and the chance for equal opportunities have meant that more females are willing to pursue research as their main professional task in academia. To date, scant research in English language teaching (ELT) has explored the emotional landscapes and motivations that shape the experiences of novice female researchers along their journey (Tran et al, 2017; Pentón Herrera et al, 2021). Motivated by this gap in the literature, in this qualitative narrative study, we explored this almost invisible group in the ELT literature, paying special

attention to participants' initial curiosity and discovery of research as an academic endeavor, as well as their struggles in a world (and cultural context) that characterizes women in roles different from being researchers. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- a) How do female language teachers deal with their emotions and feelings in their journey into doing research?
- b) To what extent may the SEL approach facilitate female novice researchers journey to succeed in their research journey?
- c) How can a SEL approach support the journey of female English teachers in their journey as novice researchers?

Literature Review

In educational settings, emotions have been considered as a key factor affecting learning as Pekrun et al., (2002) affirm. Furthermore, positive emotions toward academic tasks might promote and even facilitate learning. However, the 21st century has brought a novel paradigm, that is, the advance of technology and the acknowledgment of the relevance of social and emotional elements in learning and, therefore, in teaching, too. The relationship between emotions and learning has mainly been researched (Méndez, 2012; Mercer, 2011) in relation to cognition and social interaction.

Emotions in the ELT field have been mostly explored from the learners' side (Hascher, 2007, Scherer, 2005) and focused on the interactions between teachers and students or the students' reactions toward their own emotions and feelings during the learning process. For example, in México, Méndez and Fabela (2014) have affirmed that the emotional experiences of learners should be acknowledged as part of the learning process. Additionally, Méndez (2012) found that emotions may regulate students' cognition development and play a relevant role in learning. Gumora and Arsenio (2002) have proved that positive emotions in students can be related to better academic performance, social and peer relationships. Additionally, Farrington et al (2012) affirmed that besides acquiring knowledge and academic skills, students must be supported in developing social-emotional competence skills.

On the other side, Pavlenko (2013) started exploring the relevance of teachers' emotions from a broad social perspective. Golombek and Duran (2014) identified emotions as an essential and functional element of language teacher professional development. Additionally, Benesh (2018) and Wolff and De Costa (2017) have taken a sociocultural approach to emotions as catalysts of change, including concepts of gender. Identifying and acknowledging emotions can facilitate female scholars' paths in research.

In the case of novice female researchers, the interaction of emotions with other such as elements might add challenges to their development as researchers. However, social and cultural views might impact on how emotions are regarded not only by women individually, but also in their social interactions according to Hareli and Rafaeli (2008). Therefore, emotions can be considered culturally and socially shaped according to the practices and traditions developed by the community or societies as Zembylas (2007) has affirmed. Women who want to access a community of researchers must also deal with the views that their corresponding societies have on gender roles. For example, Simon-Maeda (2004) could prove that although there has been progress in teacher education, women educators, in Japan, still face disadvantages in relation to equity and cultural capital.

The numbers of women in academia have increased recently as a result for demands of equal opportunities for women and men, including the opportunity to become a researcher. This chapter takes a critical perspective (Freire, 1970) to empower female scholars to transcend

their limitations as women (Fay, 1987). For example, Montiel (2015) has stated that women are usually associated with the domestic sphere rather than in the public sphere in contrast to men who are shown as competent in the public sphere. However, some studies have explored the way gender and inequality are still enacted and reproduced through language in texts as van Dijk (2001) has affirmed. Therefore, this chapter focuses on female language teachers who aspire to become researchers in the ELT field. However, these women claim that despite the efforts of inclusion and diversity, there are still challenges to overcome for female researchers.

Theoretical framework

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a pathway to understanding the holistic development of learners. According to Pentón-Herrera (2020) SEL is both a teaching approach and a process that focuses on the development and strengthening of the affective skills necessary for individuals to be healthy, happy, successful, and responsible. Following Osher et al. (2016) SEL recognizes competences to deal with emotions, achieve goals, make decisions, and construct supportive interactions to become successful learners. Therefore, SEL can be applied to exploring the emotional landscape of a resilient community such as the novice female researchers.

Within the SEL approach, there are several frameworks which can be used as tools to analyze learners' needs and to identify the skills and competencies to develop. These skills and competencies may cross several aspects of the learners' lives such as school, work, home, and community, for example. Among these frameworks, the Pratham life skills framework seemed to be the most suitable model to categorize and analyze the participants' answers in the chapter. This framework has been used in different contexts (Banerji, 2021; Gupta, 2021), for example, the Second Chance program by the Pratham Education Foundation which aimed to empower girls and women in India. This framework was designed to help girls develop life skills to tackle social and cultural constraints by facilitating girls' access to education (Pratham Ed. 2018). According to the EASEL Lab webpage from the Harvard University, the Pratham's Life Skills Framework consists of six components:

- 1) **Self-Awareness**-which involves recognizing strengths and weaknesses, identifying emotions, a process of self-reflection and the development of self-confidence.
- 2) **Self-Management**- The self-management element is about regulating emotions and developing self-esteem, self-discipline, self-motivation, self-care, goal setting, time management and resilience.
- 3) **Interpersonal Skills**- deals with communication skills and the development of empathy, trust, the appreciation of diversity and the ability to work with people through cooperation, collaboration, and respect.
- 4) **Problem Solving**-involves creative and critical thinking, logical thinking, decision making in daily life and under challenging situations.
- 5) **Leadership**- which has to do with initiative, innovation, vision, leading by example by doing the right thing or making the right choices.
- 6) **Technical Skills**- involves digital literacy: computer skills, exploring and researching for information, documenting facts and financial management (Pratham Educational Foundation).

The usefulness of this framework has also been recognized by several institutions such as the Harvard Graduate School. The components of the Pratham Life Skills framework provide learners with awareness on essential competencies to deal with global societies and changing environments. This way, emotions can be understood as active processes (Eraut,

2011) that might foster the emergence of competencies and skills that facilitate the development of knowledge in diverse communities such as the female group of researchers in this study.

Methodology

Women in academia go through emotional processes that have not been explored in depth (Day & Lee, 2011; Pentón Herrera et al., 2021). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the emotional landscapes of female scholars going into a PhD program in Mexico while developing competencies to become researchers. The study followed a qualitative approach and a narrative inquiry analysis (Bamberg, 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Specifically, the study utilized the concept of “short stories” which, according to Barkhuizen (2016), are immersed in larger interactions such as conversations and interviews as it was the case of the study. Additionally, Bamberg (2020) wrote about the “small stories”. The small story theory emerged from the idea that narratives come after or before other narrative actions in everyday interactions, emphasizing the contextualization of these small/short stories in a communication continuum.

A narrative inquiry allows researchers to use experiences as a phenomenon of study, as Connelly and Clandinin (2006) have affirmed. Personal experiences, then, facilitate reflection upon experience by telling stories that happen in a given field or a specific context. Barkhuizen (2016) proposed to analyze the “short stories” within interactions. In the study, the short and small stories told by a group of female scholars within interviews in relation to their emotions were analyzed and interpreted for both their content and context.

Additionally, the qualitative approach of the study involved reflexivity, as Creswell, (2014) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) have affirmed. Researchers rely on personal background and cultural knowledge to interpret the participants’ meaning in telling their accounts as novice researchers, especially novice researchers who have not had much expertise in working within research communities. However, reflexivity allowed personal insights into gender (Castillo & Salas, 2021) to emerge when interacting with the participants. By listening to their small/short stories, we also made meaning from our own past experiences.

Context

In Mexico, the opportunities to pursue a postgraduate degree in the field of Teaching and Learning English are expanding according to the demand for prepared and professional language teachers and for qualified researchers in the field. The study was carried out at the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* (BUAP). This university was one of the first public institutions to offer a BA in ELT in 1984. Because of the demands for researchers in the field and more prepared professionals in ELT, in 2005, BUAP offered an MA program in English Language Teaching (ELT). More recently, in 2023, BUAP opened a Ph.D. program in language teaching: the Doctorate in Language Teaching and Learning (DEAL for its initials in Spanish). This new postgraduate program has the purpose of forming researchers in the field of language teaching.

Participants

The participants of this study were part of the first cohort of the DEAL, that consisted of 11 students. Five of them were already experienced researchers. However, six students were new to research, that is novice researchers. Previously, they had been committed to their

teaching career and were initiating a journey into the new program which required them to become researchers. Invitations to be part of the research were sent to these six female novice researchers and were arranged with five of them. These five female scholars became the participants of the study. They were all Mexican and Spanish was their first language, however, they were all language teachers for several years before they started their PhD program. Table 1 presents some demographic information about the participants:

Table 1. Participants

Participant	Languages spoken	Languages taught	Teaching experience Years	Teaching experience Level
1. Emma	English & Spanish	English & Spanish	17 years	All levels
2. Lia	French, English, Italian, Portuguese & Spanish	French & English	10 years	Adults
3. Tina	English, Italian, French & Japanese	Italian & Spanish	11 years	Teenagers & Adults
4. Carmen	Spanish, English & German	Spanish, English & German	15 years	All levels
5. Alexa	Spanish & English	English	4 years	Children

The information in Table 1 shows that the group of participants represented a multilingual context and diverse backgrounds. Participants’ ages ranged from 30 to 42 years. They were all informed of the nature of the study and voluntarily consented to participate in the research. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Instrument

Interviews were the most suitable way to collect the necessary information to answer the research questions established. According to Punch (2014, 144), “the interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research... as a good way of accessing people’s perception, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality”. The semi-structured interviews aimed to capture the participants’ emotional experiences and a general landscape of female novice researchers. Additionally, the oral interaction through the open-ended questions invited the participants to share the small or short stories of their daily experiences as novice researchers. (See Appendix 1).

The participants were interviewed individually, and each interview was 25 minutes long in average. Three of the interviews were conducted in English, and the rest were in Spanish. The answers were translated in order to present results. The interviews were carried out through Zoom and the participants were informed that the interviews were going to be recorded so that the researcher could listen to the dialogues several times.

Findings

Silverman (2011) explained that interviews are always situated and textual. We used the end of the first semester of a newly created PhD program in Language teaching and learning as a suitable moment to carry out the interviews regarding the participants’ emotions as female novice researchers following the SEL framework. The findings of the study were organized into two sections, 1) Pratham Life Skills framework and 2) Short- Small stories according to Barkhuizen (2016) and Bamberg (2020), as exemplified in the following chart.

1) Pratham Life Skills framework:

Chart 1. Self-Awareness

Participant	Self-Awareness: strengths and weaknesses, identifying emotions, a process of self-reflection and the development of self-confidence.
Emma	<i>Research can enrich you, as a person, your career and even make a change in society. Through research you feel that you are not alone. There is always something to improve. Although I don't consider myself a researcher, yet. I feel a little lost now, I need to find information to find my topic. I want my thesis to have an impact. I feel positive, but a little stressed.</i>
Lia	<i>Research can change you; I see it in my teaching practice, in my personal life. By becoming aware of practices. I can evaluate my teaching and become more human. I feel excited but worried. I would like to participate in congresses; to write about my experiences and find meaning in my practice. I want to present my teaching and learning so that others can find solutions or meanings, too.</i>
Tina	<i>I am not confident about myself; I still feel a little lost. I am doubting about myself. In the end, I know I can do it.</i>
Carmen	<i>When I was in the master's program, I discovered a new world of research! I wanted to be like my teachers.</i> <i>I discovered that I really enjoyed writing and communicating my ideas.</i> <i>I wanted to publish right from the beginning.</i>
Alexa	<i>I am a mother of three, this has not been easy, but I want to be a researcher. Don't tell me that I cannot do it because I am a mother. I feel excited because I am in a PhD program,</i>

According to the participants’ answers, their feelings went from excitement to anxiety and stress. They also mentioned their aspirations and goals at the beginning of the first semester of their PhD program. By identifying their emotions, the participants could express their fears but also their future plans (See chart 2).

Chart 2. Self-Management

Participant	Self-Management- The self-management element is about regulating emotions and developing self-esteem, self-discipline, self-motivation, self-care, goal setting, time management and resilience.
Emma	<p><i>I need to self-manage time, work, family, as I have to keep working.</i></p> <p><i>I would say teaching life takes most of my time. Trying to have a balance between my personal and professional life is complicated and I have no kids! If I had kids, I wouldn't be able to be here. –</i></p> <p><i>When I talk, I relax, so I visit my parents, I talk to friends.</i></p> <p><i>To be honest, I am not good at taking care of myself, I sometimes even miss a meal because I am working.</i></p> <p><i>I do not do exercise because I think I should be working and not exercising.</i></p>
Lia	<p><i>I need time: research needs time. We need to organize our times and tasks to fulfill. But we also need to carry out other activities and spend time and time with the family.</i></p> <p><i>We need to rest, or we may suffer of burnout.</i></p> <p><i>Researchers need to balance things and organize time and tasks. I try to relax- I walk, I breathe, I feel I release all the bad energy.</i></p> <p><i>I write, I relax and then, I can write, again.</i></p>
Tina	<p><i>I don't have a personal life now, everything is about work and research, I sometimes do not pay attention to important things such as not eating well, basic things- Now, I don't have a good balance. I need time to relax and for physical movement-</i></p>
Carmen	<p><i>I need to manage my time to do my tasks and accomplish everything. I cannot focus yet- I like everything.</i></p> <p><i>I think the opportunities are equal for men and women, but women have all the responsibilities, here in Mexico, men do not worry too much about the kids or they do not help enough. So, I feel I have to do everything.</i></p> <p><i>I relax when I spend time with my husband or kids on the weekend.</i></p>
Alexa	<p><i>With kids, I have to organize myself very well. I take responsibility of most of the things at home. My husband tries to support me, but down in my mind, I know it's my responsibility even when he tells me that I do not have to do everything, but it is something we have in our minds.</i></p>

The Self-Management skill was a relevant one for the participants. The participants mentioned their concerns about time management, self-care and discipline development. As can be seen in Chart 3, the participants also became aware of the challenges that women face when they want to become researchers.

Chart 3. Interpersonal Skills

Participant	Interpersonal Skills- deals with communication skills and the development of empathy, trust, the appreciation of diversity and the ability to work with people through cooperation, collaboration, and respect.
Emma	Teachers have always supported me, <i>My mom is in the field, and she always motivates me as well as my brothers and my husband.</i> <i>By collaborating with others, you can see other points of view and apply what you learn.</i> <i>I tell women interested in research to go for it. Find your passion and</i>
Lia	<i>My teachers have supported me, my family always encourages me to keep doing what I like to do.</i>
Tina	<i>Peers in several stages—they keep me focused and they help me.</i> <i>Collaborations are important because we can work together.</i> <i>Teachers have always been supportive, not only my theses directors, but teachers of other subjects.</i>
Carmen	<i>My teachers- they have helped me a lot, they motivate me. My mom, by helping me with the kids and my classmates by sharing what they know or what they have done in research.</i>
Alexa	<i>My husband supports me. My classmates in the PhD encourage me to continue. The teachers motivate me.</i>

The Interpersonal skill emerged as a very important aspect of the female novice researchers’ journey. As shown in Chart 4, teachers, peers, friends, directors and family members were mentioned as essential supportive networks for the participants.

Chart 4. Leadership

Participant	Leadership- which has to do with initiative, innovation, vision, leading by example by doing the right thing or making the right choices.
Emma	<i>Doing research can enrich you, as a person, your career and even make a change on society, I can tell women who want to get involved in research: Find something you want to do and see how you can contribute in a way to society,</i> <i>I want to do research not only at the local context, but at an international one. I want to make a difference. I know I can do it.</i>
Lia	<i>I have changed and improved in my personal and professional life.</i>
Tina	<i>I know I can do it. I will find the way.</i>
Carmen	<i>Now I want to explore the research path- I want to pursue a career as a researcher.</i> <i>I want to exhaust all the possibilities- I want to write- I feel I can do it and I want to explore it.</i> <i>My thesis director in the M.A. was not the support I expected, but this allowed me to do it by myself.</i> <i>I feel excited and humbled- when you’re in the MA you feel you know everything, but in the PhD, I realize how much I need to learn!</i>
Alexa	<i>I will do everything I can to do this for myself.</i>

The participants mentioned perseverance and they were confident about their decisions and agency. They realized that things can be difficult, but they were willing to work hard to pursue their dream of becoming researchers (See Chart 5).

Chart 5. Technical Skills

Participant	Technical Skills- involves digital literacy: computer skills, exploring and researching for information, documenting facts and financial management.
Emma	<i>I feel I need to learn how to do research properly.</i>
Lia	<i>I don't feel prepared- I need knowledge to produce knowledge. I need to improve my academic and scientific writing skills- I want to know how I can access and belong to the research community.</i>
Tina	<i>I have to learn many things,</i>
Carmen	<i>I wanted to become a researcher since the MA, but then, I realized there was a different way to say and write things, I wanted to polish my first paper, but I didn't know how to do it, so I had to do it several times and I decided that I needed to learn more. I want to become the expert in an area, give conferences, and so on.</i>
Alexa	<i>I still do not feel that I am a researcher, maybe in the future. I have to learn many things. I feel that I am behind my classmates, as I have not worked or studied since I finished the MA. So, I need to update my knowledge.</i>

Regarding the technical skills needed to become researchers, the participants mentioned, among others, to learn about academic writing and to develop the researchers' discourse. They also mentioned the need to update their knowledge in order to succeed in their studies.

2) Short- Small stories- Barkhuizen (2016), Bamberg (2020)

During the interviews, some stories emerged. The participants' stories mirrored the concerns and challenges they have faced as they have embarked into their PhD and research journey. The stories they shared made meaning and created community among these female novice researchers. For example, they told stories about collaboration, resilience, and support. As can be seen in (1), the participant talked about the support that she received from another female and how both of them collaborated to conclude their M.A. thesis. In (2), Lia expressed the stressful moment that she lived as a novice researcher when she did her research and defended her thesis. In addition, she mentioned that the support of a teacher helped her to overcome that difficult situation. In (3), Emma commented that writing a thesis could lead to feelings of insecurity and confusion. In the same vein as the participant in (2), Emma considered that the support of an expert researcher helped her to improve her work and made her feel more confident. Finally, in (4), the participant claimed that the roles that are given by the society, determine the spaces and tasks that women and men must develop within the society. This way of thinking influences how women behave, and it is hard to change.

1. A story of collaboration

Tina: I made the M.A. with a friend, and this made the difference. She tried to help me and made me finish the thesis; we finished our thesis together. I was afraid for the stories I had heard about the presentation of the thesis, but we got together to study and write, and we were among the first students to defend our thesis.

2. A story of teacher support (1)

Lia: I remember when I defended my BA thesis. I was very, very nervous. I got to the university early and one of my teachers saw me. She talked to me, and we started talking about my thesis and she made me relax and told me to think about a similar situation and how I dealt with it. I successfully defended my thesis. When the questions and answers started, I could relax, and I realized that I did not have to worry about the exam anymore because that stage of my life was finishing. I was not afraid anymore.

3. A story of teacher support (2)

Emma: When I was writing my M.A. thesis, I felt very insecure, and I knew something was wrong with my research. I asked a classmate to read it, and she said that there was something missing, but she did not know what it was. Then, one of my teachers volunteered to read my thesis. She even sat with me and explained what the problem was. Without any obligation, she gave me recommendations and materials. Her support made me feel safe and confident.

4. A story on social expectations

Alexa: Probably, society is not asking it from us. Nobody has told me to do everything, it comes from us: that we need to be in charge of everything- I think we have been brainwashed. We, women, know we have to do everything. We feel it's our responsibility- down there, in my brain, I feel that the responsibility is mine. Even when my husband supports me. I feel I need to do things at home.

These were some examples of the stories that emerged during the interviews. As Bamberg (2020) and Barkhuizen (2016) affirm, these short or small stories reflect the daily life of people in a field and may be common to the community. In the context of the study, the stories were told by the community of female novice teachers in a PhD program in language teaching and learning in a public university in Puebla, Mexico.

Discussion

Exploring and analyzing the emotional landscape of female novice researchers in language teaching is a necessary task in terms of equity and inclusion. The questions allowed the participants to reflect on the transition they were going through. Farrell (2015) explained that teacher reflection is an important and integral part of any professional development action such as enrolling in a PhD program. Additionally, as Simon-Maeda (2004) affirmed, being a female teacher might be a cause of conflict when they face limitations for ideological contexts. In Mexico, raising children is a responsibility that has been culturally assigned to women and it is frowned upon by the society that women put their work or academic life before their family (Figueroa Pliz & Ortega Olivares, 2010). In the study, three of the participants affirmed that they (women) take the responsibility of the tasks at home on their own. They mentioned that even when they had their husbands support, they felt that they were responsible for the household chores. They mentioned that it is part of Latin American ideology on gender roles.

The participants proved that emotions play a relevant role in a research journey, following Yazan et al., (2023) they also mentioned a complete array of feelings as part of the enterprise of enrolling in a doctoral program, from confusion, insecurity, excitement, hope and optimism as part of the process. However, the framework of the Pratham Life Skills served as a useful tool to organize the participants' answers following the SEL concepts. SEL also allowed to identify emotional aspects that more experienced researchers might overcome. The

participants also expressed their feelings from the internal and personal level to the interactions with peers and professors who shared and understood the situations they were living at the moment highlighting the importance of female support networks (Castillo & Salas, 2021) in the figures of mothers, friends, colleagues and teachers. Shehadeh (2019) mentioned that it was relevant to create options and opportunities for novice researchers as well as guiding and supporting them in their research path.

As Barkhuizen (2016) and Bamberg (2006; 2020) said, by identifying the stories may create a sense of community and a feeling of belonging. The small or short stories immersed in the interviews called for attention to the experiences that these novice researchers have gone through. Their stories exemplify some of the challenges they face in their research and postgraduate adventures. Each step involves an emotional reaction that when appropriately managed, it might lead to achievement and personal growth.

Finally, the element of gender made participants more aware of the expectations and gender roles society has on women. However, the participants reflected that they were the ones who took those expectations and roles as their own even when these chores may have a negative impact on their research tasks and their personal well-being. Women continue to be at a disadvantage compared to men since they have been assigned to take care of children and housework, for example. Even when the participants mentioned that people around them were willing to help them, they felt that some tasks related to gender roles, were their responsibility as women, that is, these were some self-inflicted tasks due to their gender. For some of them, it was a real challenge to continue studying and then, becoming professionals in order to get a good job. At some point, some women take the decision to dedicate their time only to their families and quit everything else (Flores Salgado & Flores Salgado, 2022). In the end, the participants admitted that finding balance between their academic and professional tasks and their personal lives is still a pending issue. The ideas SEL might offer them the appropriate approach to manage the different aspects of their lives and look for an integral and holistic well-being.

Conclusions

The emergence of SEL in the educational field has placed emotions and feelings in a relevant place in the learning process and has made professors and coordinators aware of the affective factors that might impact on students' learning. SEL can be a powerful tool to raise awareness and reflection on the emotional status of people going through a transition in their personal or professional lives.

A transition in life involves reflection, growth and a development of a new self. This chapter focused on the transition from language teachers to researchers of a group of female novice researchers during a PhD program. The results proved that it is relevant to facilitate supportive accompaniment processes from teachers, peers, classmates and family members as the participants mentioned as well as a revalorization of the novice researchers' self-perceptions and emotions.

Additionally, postgraduate programs may include the lookout for balance between the personal and the professional in order to enhance the probabilities of academic success in postgraduate students.

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Appendix 1: Bank of questions for interviews

The emotional journey of female researchers

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study which has the aim to explore the emotional journey of female novice researchers. Could you, please, answer the following questions?

- 1.- Why are you interested in becoming a researcher?
- 2.- How might research change your professional career?
- 3.- How prepared do you think you are to become a researcher?
- 4.- What are some of your goals as a researcher?
- 5.- To what extent do people around support you?
- 6.- What challenges have you encountered along your professional journey?
- 7.- What challenges have you encountered as a female researcher?
- 8.- In your context, do you think that male and female researchers face the same problems?
- 8.- Who has supported you the most during your research journey?
- 9.- Can you describe your feelings during this journey?
- 10.- What makes you happy as a researcher?
11. What makes you angry as a researcher?
- 12.- What do you do to take care of yourself?
- 13.- How do you relax?
- 14.- Can you tell us a story that illustrates your journey into research?
- 15.- What is /are your fields of expertise?
- 16.- How do you manage your time between your professional and personal tasks?
- 17.- What recommendations would you give to a female ELT professional who wants to become a researcher?

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Student Task Engagement in Remote Language Learning During the Pandemic: Perspectives and Experiences of Junior High School English Teachers

Participación estudiantil en actividades desarrolladas en la modalidad remota durante la pandemia: Perspectivas y experiencias de docentes de secundaria

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ABSTRACT

The level of participation and involvement of students in their learning activities, student task engagement, is regarded as one of the essential conditions for success in language learning. The main objective of this qualitative study was to explore how junior high school English teachers approach student task engagement in a remote language learning context during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, a focus group and individual interviews were conducted with English teachers from a private school in Asunción. Results indicated that they had well-defined perspectives concerning student task engagement in language learning, and they reported using varied strategies, activities, and resources as well as facing several challenges in the design and implementation of learning tasks in their efforts to promote language task engagement in remote classes. From their statements, it can be concluded that their beliefs directed their teaching practices in times of remote instruction, but they could not avoid encountering challenges of different nature that hindered the integration of engagement facilitators into learning tasks in order to foster student task engagement.

Keywords: challenges; experiences; facilitators; language learning; perspectives; remote instruction; Student task engagement.

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RESUMEN

El nivel de participación activa e involucramiento de los estudiantes en sus tareas académicas es considerada una de las condiciones esenciales para el éxito en el aprendizaje de idiomas. El objetivo principal de este estudio cualitativo fue el de explorar cómo unos profesores de inglés de secundaria abordaron el involucramiento de los alumnos en clases de inglés a distancia durante la pandemia de COVID-19. Para ello, se realizó un grupo focal y entrevistas individuales con profesores de inglés de un colegio privado de Asunción. Los resultados indicaron que ellos tenían perspectivas bien definidas con respecto a la participación de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje de idiomas, e informaron que utilizaron diversas estrategias, actividades y recursos, así como que enfrentaron varios desafíos en el diseño e implementación de actividades en sus esfuerzos por promover la participación activa de los estudiantes en clases a distancia. A partir de sus declaraciones, se puede concluir que sus ideas orientaron sus prácticas educativas en tiempos de instrucción a distancia, pero no pudieron evitar encontrar desafíos de diferente naturaleza que obstaculizaron la integración de facilitadores en actividades de aprendizaje con el fin de promover la participación activa de los estudiantes en la realización de tareas.

Palabras clave: desafíos; experiencias; facilitadores; aprendizaje de idiomas; perspectivas; enseñanza remota; participación del alumno en las tareas.

Introduction

In any school class, diverse people and several pedagogical elements are constantly interacting and shaping the learning environment. What teachers do, how they do it, and what they use for instruction in different moments necessarily cause an effect on the students, who, in turn, respond either positively or negatively and can also produce something on their own. One concept that has received much attention in the last decades is that of student task engagement, which is the students' level of participation and involvement in their learning activities. (Mercer, 2019; Philp & Duchesne, 2016)

The significance of student engagement has also been noticed by researchers in the domain of language education. (Egbert et al., 2021; Hiver, Al-Hoorie, & Mercer, 2021; Mercer, 2019) Authors highlight how necessary it is for language learners to become actively engaged in their learning since the development of effective communicative language skills in a second or foreign language requires high levels of involvement, long periods of practice, and active participation along the way. (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020) Thus, in order to have a better understanding of this concept and approach it from a unified perspective, the Model of Language Task Engagement was proposed by Egbert and colleagues (2021) to examine the facilitators, task elements, indicators, and outcomes of engagement at task level in language learning settings. Egbert (2020b) highlights the importance of focusing on this framework because its assumptions are equally valid in both online and offline language learning contexts, so it gives teachers an excellent opportunity to “engage their students no matter where they are and what tools they have” (Egbert, 2020b, p. 315), which was especially useful due to the unprecedented circumstance where many schools provided online, remote, or blended instruction to their students because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

This qualitative study examined this concept from the perspectives and experiences of junior high school (7th, 8th, and 9th grade) teachers of English in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, using as a framework the Model of Language Task Engagement. Their perspectives, their teaching practices, and the challenges they experienced in their remote classes were analyzed to understand what they think about this concept and how it influenced their teaching.

Considering that the COVID-19 pandemic shaped education at all levels, it was important to observe how English teachers experienced student task engagement in remote instruction. A focus on task engagement became even more relevant when considering that, according to researchers around the world, keeping students engaged in remote instruction became a challenging endeavor in times of the pandemic. This was true for schools (De La Rosa, 2020;

Khlaif, Salha, & Kouraichi, 2021; Kingsbury, 2021) and even higher education institutions around the world. (Hill & Fitzgerald, 2020; Zhang et al., 2021) Also, the relationship between the perspective of teachers about student engagement and their teaching practices has not received much attention in academic literature; such aspects could not remain ignored since, according to researchers, the perspectives and experiences of teachers shape their decisions and can influence students' engagement. (Berry, 2019; Fredricks et al., 2016; Harris, 2011)

Therefore, this study explored the perspectives of junior high school teachers of English about student task engagement in remote language classes, their efforts to deliver engaging activities in this context, and the challenges they experienced in the process. A focus on the integration of engagement facilitators into task elements to support student task engagement in language learning, as proposed in the Model of Language Task Engagement by Egbert et al. (2021), was used as a framework to guide the research process.

Methods

A qualitative case study approach was employed to offer a detailed account of the dynamics in a specific learning scenario, thus gaining insights and a deeper understanding of the perspectives of teachers. (Lodico et al., 2010; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) A phenomenological, in-depth interview was used to understand how teachers view and experience reality, as well as the meaning they make of these experiences. (Lodico et al., 2010; Seidman, 2006) Data was collected through a focus group discussion and individual interviews to explore participants' perceptions about the concept of student task engagement, their teaching practices in remote classes, and the challenges they experienced in the design and implementation of tasks in this learning environment. Interview guides, which were pilot tested beforehand in two interview sessions with a teacher, guaranteed that all relevant topics were addressed and that all participants were asked the same questions (Patton, 2015). Open-ended questions were adapted from the studies of Berry (2019), Egbert. et al. (2021), and Fredricks et al. (2016).

According to some researchers, it is between the middle and junior high school years that levels of student engagement begin to change and often decline. (Fredricks et al., 2019; Wang & Fredricks, 2014; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007) For this reason, three junior high school teachers of English from a private school in Asunción were purposefully selected. They have twenty-three hours of English (Language Arts) classes per week, and in each grade, students are grouped into three levels according to their level of proficiency: Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced. Due to the pandemic, classes were delivered remotely in the format of synchronous classes; however, over the course of the year, classes slowly transitioned to the hyflex format, where “each class session and learning activity is offered in-person, synchronously online, and asynchronously online” (EDUCAUSE, 2020). Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and also to ease the reading of the results.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Experience	Level of Students
Teacher Carol	31	F	5 years	Beginners
Teacher Robert	26	M	4 years	Intermediate
Teacher James	28	M	4 years	Advanced

Source: Primary data collected by the author, Lambaré, 2021

After gaining consent from the teachers and their institution, a focus group session and individual interviews were organized and recorded using Zoom. During these meetings, the concept and meaning of each facilitator of language task engagement (Authenticity, Social Interaction, Learning Support, Interest, Autonomy, Challenge) were examined with the teachers, and they shared the challenges concerning the design and implementation of tasks where such engagement facilitators were integrated. They provided rich and detailed data, allowing the opportunity to explore themes in depth while also probing and asking follow-up questions (Frechtling, 2002).

Once all the data had been collected, interviews were transcribed, organized, and analyzed using qualitative data analysis software. A “preliminary exploratory analysis” was performed before engaging in open and axial coding (Creswell, 2014, p. 267). Then, similar and interrelated codes were integrated under specific categories to display the key ideas in the data and locate the main themes to answer the research questions. (Creswell; 2014) A priori codes used in this study were the names of the facilitators of engagement in the Model of Language Task Engagement by Egbert et. al (2021). These codes and categories served as the basis for answering research questions and presenting the results.

Results

This section presents the analysis conducted to examine the shared beliefs and experiences of teachers in order to understand how this concept was addressed by them in remote instruction during the pandemic. The main themes include the perspectives of teachers about student task engagement in language learning, perceptions regarding this concept in remote instruction, practices to support student task engagement, indicators of student task engagement perceived in this context, and challenges in the design and implementation of tasks with engagement facilitators integrated in remote language classes.

Perspectives of teachers about student task engagement in language learning

Participants indicated what they understood by student task engagement in language learning and expressed their opinions about the factors that made it possible as well as how it is manifested. They were told in advance that they could think in terms of remote and in-person scenarios. A thorough conceptualization was given by teacher Robert, who stated that student engagement depends “on several factors, [...] one of them being the individual students, like the individuality[...] how they feel in terms of learning a language[...] and then comes the other factor, that the teacher makes the class engaging”. He mentioned that a suitable combination of those elements encourages an “open space where they can share, where they can work and learn at the same time [...] where they feel like they want to learn.”

Teachers acknowledge that task engagement is not solely dependent on their actions and efforts. They plan and monitor their classes to promote student engagement, and evaluate results to identify what works and what doesn't. However, students should also be motivated to learn English to experience task engagement during lessons. Teachers James and Carol believe that 50% of the effort goes to the teacher, while the other half goes to the student. They believe that students' feelings and attitudes towards learning English are equally important as the plans, activities, and efforts employed by teachers. Therefore, it is challenging for students who dislike English to engage in class.

Participants, former language learners and teachers, believe student engagement is possible under specific conditions. Their beliefs are summarized in a table, which also identifies their category of task engagement facilitators.

Table 2. Teachers’ Beliefs Concerning the Necessary Conditions for Student Task Engagement in Language Learning

Facilitators	Concrete actions	Examples
Interest	Presenting lessons and activities that are related to: - Personal and academic interests of students	“I really liked the activities [...] that were focused on listening tasks that included music. [...] mostly activities that were related to music because I'm interested in music.” “[...] the teacher integrated biblical teaching with English, so that was very attractive for me.” “[...] and also to learn about the culture in general. [Those] topics were interesting, so for me as a student that was very engaging.”
Authenticity	- Authentic materials	“Use authentic materials from outside the book. Something from outside the classroom, something they want, that they like.”
Learning support	- Real contexts	“Make something meaningful for them [...] and apply that in real situations that are happening right now, so they can use the language in that context.” “[...] make it meaningful for them so that it's not just a task, but rather something that you could apply in real contexts.”
Social interaction	Working with activities where students can interact with their peers in group work	“I really enjoyed gathering with different groups, different perspectives, to know different points of view.”
Challenge	Offering challenging and attainable activities	“[activities] that help the students to be, like, involved in their own learning. So, for example, with questions where they need to like do a little bit of critical thinking [...]”
Social interaction	Preparing activities where learners can share their experiences	“They love to share their own experiences. [...] give them time to speak about those experiences.” “The fact that they can share, they can express, they can tell something that belongs to them makes it engaging.”
Authenticity		“They want to share their own opinions, their own beliefs, so that's great for the classroom environment.”
Learning support	Creating a comfortable, safe environment	“I also make them feel comfortable. I say ‘if you make mistakes, that's OK. That's perfect. That's the way you

		learn.’ [...] So, I think at that moment they are more comfortable to share their ideas.” “This is also important, to create an environment for them to feel safe, so when you do that, they are more open to express what they think.”
Interest Social Interaction	Playing games and competing against each other	“Students from 12 to 15, they have some sort of engagement. It's through competition. They like to compete, like, these activities where they can be challenged and compete with others.” “Well, with games sometimes, yes, you can see that all of them want to be part of those specific games.”
Autonomy	Allowing students to offer suggestions or change some aspects of an activity	“If you have a specific topic [...] to write about and they don't feel connected, then you can change [it]. You can ask them: What would you like to write about? And they give you some ideas and then go ahead. Give them the opportunity to change the topic so they can feel more comfortable, more connected to what they want to write.”

Source: Primary data collected by the author

Similarly, participants listed common indicators of student task engagement, which are active behaviors during learning activities. Teachers described what task engagement looks like, based on students' attitudes and reactions towards activities, teachers, and peers. Some examples could be categorized into multiple domains, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing these dimensions in educational settings.

Table 3. Indicators of Student Task Engagement in Language Learning

Dimension(s)	Indicators of student task engagement in language learning	Examples
Cognitive Affective Behavioral	Enjoyment, active participation, and focused attention	“What I noticed in my students [...] is that they participate actively, and they are truly focused on the topic or the lesson, and also that they enjoy the lesson.”
Agentic Social	Willingness to express their opinions, readiness to interact	“[...] when they are participating and when they are giving their opinion even though sometimes you are not looking for that opinion.”
Affective Social	Excitement, readiness to interact	“[...] they were really excited to share what they did at home.”

		“They were fascinated to talk, express, and present what they wanted [...], and they enjoyed it.”
Cognitive	Asking questions	“How do I know [that students are engaged]? Well, basically they start asking questions.”
Social Cognitive	Communicating what was learned, providing explanations	“[...] Sometimes they are the ones that explain ‘yes teacher, this is that and that’. It's like they want to show what they know, right? So, when that happens, I know that that student paid attention, that the student is engaged.”
Behavioral Cognitive Affective	Striving to complete a task, effort expended, enthusiasm	“Even though they didn't know some words, they were super engaged and tried to prove their points, which is difficult, right? [...] They were still trying and trying to come up with their idea [...] Everybody was trying to prove their point.”
Social Behavioral	Eagerness to talk, active participation	“They want to talk a lot, so you know they are engaged somehow because they are actively participating.” “You clearly see the ones that enjoy the class, the classes, and they share their ideas, they speak, they discuss actively all the time.”
Social Cognitive	Helping their classmates, exchanging ideas	“[...] when somebody is asking a question and the students, they are the ones who want to share the answer and they give their answers or they explain again what you already said [...] that is something amazing that happens sometimes, when they help their classmates to complete some activities.”
Cognitive Behavioral	Task completion, going beyond expectations	“And there were just a few who did the task perfectly, let's say, who exceeded expectations. [...] They did more than they had to. So that's another very rewarding thing that you can get from students that are engaged.”
Agetic	Offering suggestions or contributions, expressing preferences, communicating what they are think and need regarding a task	“They understand the task, they just want to do it differently. [...] These students that suggest variations are the ones that are engaged with the activity.” “It happened to me there was this topic and one of the students said: ‘teacher, do we have to write about this [...]? Can I write about something else but following those instructions?’.”
Affective	Expressing their satisfaction	“You can know when they are truly engaged when they express that, in the sense that they say, or they express that they are satisfied with the lesson. [...] A student told me that he finally understood the grammar topic. [...] He told me

		that, and he was really happy that we had had that class.”
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Source: Primary data collected by the author

Finally, teachers highlighted the outcomes of student task engagement in language learning. Participants stated that task engagement contributes to the process of learning and also indicated that noticing their students’ engagement is meaningful and enjoyable for them.

Table 4. Outcomes of Student Task Engagement in Language Learning

Outcomes of student task engagement in language learning	Examples
Success in learning	“I see progress in the students that are truly engaged in the lesson.”
Improvement of the learning experience	“[...] it could become like a very open space where they can share, where they can work and learn at the same time.” “I would also say that the learning process would be easier for them.”
Satisfaction and enjoyment for teachers	“It’s a process that both of us, teacher and students, enjoy.” “So, it was super funny to see them even though they didn’t know some words, they were super engaged and tried to prove their points [...] that for me was very meaningful, for them to, like, engage in that level.” “When they go beyond what you expect [...] that is something teachers love.” “[...]because they did more than they had to. So that’s another very rewarding thing that you can get from students that are engaged.” “[...] that is something amazing that happens sometimes, when they help their classmates to complete some activities.”

Source: Primary data collected by the author

Teachers’ perspectives and practices to support student task engagement in remote language classes

Remote teaching affects task engagement due to the impossibility of being together, lack of peer contact, and family issues. Students’ cameras and microphones can hinder their participation, despite efforts to involve them. Teachers Carol and James find remote teaching more difficult than in person, while teacher Robert believes it was only the beginning. However, technology is used to support student task engagement and hopes to continue in normal settings. The use of technology in remote teaching is essential for maintaining student engagement and promoting learning.

The study reveals that remote language classes can be effectively supported by various strategies, activities, and tools. These include warm-up activities like storytelling, informal chats, and games, which engage students' attention and interest. Speaking activities, such as class discussions, debates, 30-second talks, and questions and answers, also help students engage. Teachers like Robert and Carol use videos to spark interest and involvement, while Carol encourages beginner students to write their ideas before sharing them aloud to improve confidence and task engagement.

Teachers relied on various strategies to encourage student engagement in writing tasks, such as cooperative or collective writing, inviting students to write blog entries with their preferred topics, and group work in remote classes. While some find group work challenging for beginners, others find it beneficial for advanced learners, as projects and group work improve participation, collaboration, and task engagement.

Teachers have found that online tools and resources, such as game-based learning platforms and interactive tools for presentation and practice, can improve student engagement. These tools, such as Kahoot!, Bamboozle, and Quizizz, are popular among students due to their instant enjoyment and ability to provide instant feedback. Teachers also use these tools for formative assessment and review, allowing them to provide instant feedback to students. On the other hand, learning platforms like Liveworksheets and Nearpod offer creative and interactive activities, multimedia resources, and real-time interaction tools. These resources are used in warm-ups, presentations, practice, self-evaluation activities, and even as alternatives to book exercises to introduce variety and keep students interested.

The six facilitators of language task engagement can be used to analyze the strategies, activities, and resources used by teachers in remote learning, providing a useful framework for evaluating class activities and clarifying the relationship between reported beliefs and actions to sustain language task engagement.

Table 5. Integration of Engagement Facilitators in Remote Language Classes

Facilitator	Activity/Procedure	Examples
Authenticity	Topics related to students' lives	<p>“I prepare activities that are related to the topic and that they can relate to their daily lives, in certain situations.”</p> <p>“One of the students told me that she is involved in a youth group that helps homeless people [...] so I asked her to write about this in her blog entry and the other students were really motivated by this [...]”</p> <p>“Most of the time I try to present an authentic activity for them so they can be really connected in all aspects with the language.”</p>
Authenticity Social Interaction	Sharing experiences and likes	<p>“Students were really engaged in that discussion time because they wanted to share what they already do at home.”</p> <p>“We have discussions, conversations, we talk about topics that they want. [...] They quite enjoy that.”</p>

<p>Social Interaction</p>	<p>Debates and group work</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Class discussions, sets of questions, conversations</p> <p>Competition</p>	<p>“I had one group presenting arguments in favor of one topic and the other group presenting arguments against. [...] They were super engaged and tried to prove their points.”</p> <p>“One activity that I remember that I use and is very engaging is cooperative or collective writing, where they can write a story together.”</p> <p>“Normally we work in groups of five, or four, or even six [students]. They participate, [...] collaborate [...] and they focus on different topics. [...] Most of them are participating, most of them are somehow engaged.”</p> <p>“[...] the topic is travel. So, I told them about a trip that I had and then I asked them about trips that they had. [...] or sometimes I show them videos which we will discuss.”</p> <p>“I try to, sometimes, be a facilitator [...] I ask the first question and they have to go on and ask another classmate. Or sometimes they have to just answer me.”</p> <p>“I include as many speaking activities as possible. And sometimes we create discussion activities, and they are motivated, so we discuss, and we talk. We share ideas [...] and opinions.”</p> <p>“They are more interested when they have a competition between them using different tools like Kahoot or the others.”</p>
<p>Interest</p>	<p>Situational interest:</p> <p>- Playing games that foster instant enjoyment</p> <p>-Variations of activities with interactive resources</p>	<p>“All of them liked the games. [...]And the emphasis for that is to use a speaking activity, so they were all interested [...] because it's a game, they enjoy it.”</p> <p>“The reward for them was playing the games. [...] Those games are for learning, to review one assignment, or when we finish one of the units, or when I'm going to start one unit.”</p> <p>“[...] we teachers use a lot Kahoot, right, which is very engaging for them because they are very into</p>

<p>Interest</p> <p>Authenticity</p>	<p>Personal interests: Addressing the interests of different students in different moments, activities with topics related to students' lives</p>	<p>competing. [...] I also use another tool, Bamboozle. A game-like tool with many variations.”</p> <p>“I use Liveworksheets. It's much more fun for them to work with those than in a regular book. It has varied activities.”</p> <p>“Another tool that I use is Liveworksheets in order to give them other types of activities to practice and to try other activities with them because sometimes you can find activities with videos, listening and other writing tasks so they can practice.”</p> <p>“Nearpod is a presentation tool, [...] it also gives you the opportunity to interact with your students through their answers [...] different things that you can do with your students, for example, they can write a sentence, complete a sentence, or draw.”</p> <p>“I know this group, they really like anime, they really talk about it, but the other group doesn't. [...] but they do have a favorite type of singers from Korea. [...] So, in one class what I did was ‘OK, we're gonna focus on this group and they are going to share’, and they loved it. They were fascinated to talk and present what they wanted about the group, and they enjoyed it. [...] and they were super amazed, thrilled because they wanted to share what they know.”</p>
<p>Challenge</p>	<p>Adjusting activities to match their level of complexity to the skills of learners</p>	<p>“When I give them the opportunity to write down what they're going to say for one or two minutes, they become more engaged instead of doing an impromptu speech.”</p>
<p>Learning Support</p>	<p>Making them feel in a safe learning environment</p> <p>Employing relevant class activities</p>	<p>“There were some questions that may be personal, [...] and then I told them they could share until the point they want. ‘And if you make any mistake, that's OK’ [...] things like that in order to encourage them to participate.”</p> <p>“There were some topics that were not real to apply here because of our context, because [of] where we live. [...] So, we did a little research on our country. And then they wrote about something related to that, and then we shared. [...] So, in that way, I could say they were more connected with the activity. [...] I felt that they wouldn't be that connected, so I adapted my class into the reality that we are, which is in our country.”</p> <p>“I consider the different abilities that students can have, the different things they might like or dislike</p>

	<p>Promoting students' needs and interests; considering activities for mixed-ability classes</p> <p>Scaffolding</p> <p>Using humor</p>	<p>to do in class and what can be kind of boring for them and not very engaging. I try to think as a student. So as a student, what would I like to do? [I] take into account their abilities and things that could help them develop the skills that are required.”</p> <p>“[...] when I ask them for their opinion, I ask them to answer in English, so sometimes I give them a structure or an example that they can apply for their answer.”</p> <p>“I always share something that is funny for them, or humor, or let them also share something, and they quite enjoy that.”</p>
<p>Autonomy</p>	<p>Encouraging initiative and creativity</p> <p>Allowing students to choose topics to perform a task</p> <p>Allowing students to organize and distribute work</p>	<p>“I want them to be able to present something that they want, or something that they like. I like to let them do different things. [...]but always, of course, always following the structure of what the activity is. ”</p> <p>“In daily activities, assignments, homework, I would also say they have this freedom to choose, to do, to express what they want. And if they really don't like the topic of the unit, they are going to say ‘Can I just do something different?’, and they give me the options. That is wonderful, and I would agree, why not? As long as they produce and are practicing, it's OK for me.”</p> <p>“The topic was interesting, but it's not something that teenagers are crazy for. So, I sort of, used a topic that they gave.”</p> <p>“I helped this student to follow the essay format so as not to miss any part from the structure that we have from the book. The thing is, the student was motivated to write it, but on her own topic. So, I let that student do it.”</p> <p>“So, I let them decide who was going to be the leader, who was going to provide the information, who was going to talk. They needed to organize everything. I would say they felt free to choose the things that they wanted to do in the group.”</p>

Source: Primary data collected by the author

Challenges in the design and implementation of tasks with engagement facilitators integrated in remote language classes

Teachers shared the challenges in integrating engagement facilitators into language tasks during remote language classes. Some students struggled with English, making the integration of certain facilitators complicated. In contrast, teacher James (advanced) pointed out that his “brilliant students [...] already know how to use the language.”

Concerning authenticity, teachers face challenges in implementing authentic tasks due to time constraints, students' diverse backgrounds, and unfamiliar topics from their books. Preparing authentic tasks requires effort and effort, which may not always be possible due to workload. Additionally, students with different cultural backgrounds may struggle to relate to the content being shared.

As to social interaction, teachers noted that some students struggle with English and feel uncomfortable in group conversations. They suggested that creativity is crucial to avoid repetitive tasks. Interaction improved when students kept their cameras on. Group work in remote environments was challenging but improved with increased structure and choice. Students' disinterest in some peers improved with increased structure and choice.

Participants discussed the challenges of learning support in remote instruction, highlighting the need for teachers to identify and provide appropriate support for students. They noted that identifying student needs and providing appropriate support is more challenging in remote lessons. Teachers also noted the high demands of providing individualized feedback and ensuring students read comments on the school's platform. They also acknowledged the difficulty in proposing relevant and varied learning activities, considering students' individualities, and establishing meaningful teacher-student relationships in this learning environment.

Teachers Robert and James emphasized the challenges of integrating a facilitator to address students' interests and promote situational interest. They argued that different activities and topics are needed to address students' diverse interests. Teachers Carol and Robert discussed the difficulties faced by students struggling with speaking and the effectiveness of game-like platforms in fostering situational interest. However, some students became anxious or discouraged with these tools if their performance was inferior to their classmates.

About the integration of autonomy, teacher Carol found it challenging to offer "choices on what to do" to students with low proficiency levels. She provided specific instructions and steps, allowing them to share opinions and suggestions. The other teachers did not report any problems with this facilitator.

Finally, teachers reflected on balanced tasks respecting challenge and skills. Teacher Robert, aware of the varying proficiency levels of intermediate students, constantly monitors and involves students to support learners in need. Teacher Carol, on the other hand, faces the challenge of identifying the right topics, grammar, and vocabulary for beginners, while avoiding students becoming anxious, frustrated, or even "hate English" due to demanding tasks.

Discussion

The perspectives of participants are aligned with the general propositions of scholars about the active nature of engagement and its role in the improvement of the learning experience of the students (Fredricks et al., 2019; Hofkens & Ruzek, 2019). Teachers did not make any reference to the multidimensional nature of student engagement, and their

descriptions matched Berry's (2019) categories of Investing and Driving and Harris' (2008) categories of Enjoying and Being Motivated. Additionally, they indicated that if students are not motivated to learn English, they cannot become engaged in their learning tasks, regardless of the efforts of their teachers (Crick, 2012). Only once did one of them use the word motivation as a synonym for engagement, a misconception that has been a common practice among authors and teachers (Christenson et al., 2012; Oga-Baldwin, 2019)-

Participants mentioned students' positive reactions such as enjoyment and excitement towards some tasks, which are indicators of affective engagement (Egbert et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021). Learners also give their opinions and preferences and make suggestions or contributions, which belong to the agentic dimension of engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). In addition, learners demonstrate active participation and invest time, attention, and effort in task completion, which correspond to the behavioral dimension (Egbert et al., 2021; Hiver, Al-Hoorie, Vitta, et al., 2021). Behaviors like asking questions for clarification of content, persisting to complete difficult tasks, going beyond expectations, providing explanations, and exchanging ideas were also noticed, which are examples of cognitive indicators (Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Hiver, Al-Hoorie, Vitta, et al., 2021) Finally, indicators like eagerness to interact with their peers, offering support to each other, and sharing what they have learned fit into the category of social engagement (Hiver, Al-Hoorie, Vitta, et al., 2021; Sang & Hiver, 2021).

Teachers in this study addressed, to some extent, each of the facilitators of language task engagement in Egbert et al.'s (2021) model: authenticity, social interaction, learning support, interest, autonomy, and challenge. Participants also noted that students' engagement significantly improves learning outcomes, as they perceive progress and positive results after lessons (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Teachers also experience satisfaction and enjoyment when their students actively participate and strive to achieve lesson goals (Skinner & Pitzer's, 2012).

Participants discussed challenges in remote learning, including inadequate assistance, poor bonding due to physical distancing, family issues, and a lack of cooperation among students, which they believe threatens student engagement. Negative conditions like family problems and deficient teacher-student relationships have been identified as issues that affect student task engagement in online and remote instruction (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dempsey & Burke, 2021; Trinidad, 2021). Agreeing with Stott (2016), participants commented that supporting task engagement in remote learning is more difficult than in face-to-face classes.

Participants reported employing various strategies, class activities, and technological tools to support language task engagement in remote learning. They focused on getting students interested, using relevant tasks, ensuring safety and support, monitoring and intervening to maintain engagement, and adapting class activities according to their perceptions. This aligns with Berry's (2019) study and Harris' (2010) study on modification in teaching practices.

Egbert et al. (2021) found that integrating facilitators into task elements, such as topics, strategies, resources, goals, processes, and products, can increase engagement in various aspects. This is possible in remote learning environments (Egbert, 2020b), as students showed some engagement. Research shows that promoting interaction, linking real-world experiences to coursework, and using relevant online and multimedia resources have positive effects on student engagement in online and remote courses (Boling et al., 2012; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Sivachenko & Nedashkivska, 2021).

As a means to sustain and increase student engagement, continuous interaction and a sense of community among participants have been suggested in online learning (Carr, 2014;

Mandernach, 2009; Robinson & Hullinger, 2008), online language learning (Jeong, 2019), and in remote learning environments (Denning et al., 2021; Kolesnikova, 2021). This study highlights the integration of authenticity and social interaction in teaching by incorporating topics related to students' lives and using various activities for sharing personal experiences (Egbert, 2020a; Ainley, 2012; Valizadeh, 2021). Videos are suggested as a resource to spark interest and engage students in conversation. Teachers also use popular learning platforms like Kahoot!, Bamboozle, and Quizizz for students to play and review content while competing, promoting instant enjoyment and engagement (Denning et al., 2021; Kolesnikova, 2021; Martín-Sómer et al., 2021; Valizadeh, 2021).

Liveworksheets and Nearpod are effective tools for presenting creative, interactive, and varied activities as alternatives to traditional tasks (Kolesnikova, 2021; Sarginson & McPherson, 2021; Valizadeh, 2021). The beginner level teacher found high engagement in students when asked to write blog entries on authentic topics, which is an effective strategy for promoting student engagement in online and remote language learning classes (Liu et al., 2016; Woo et al., 2011; Sivachenko & Nedashkivska, 2021). Nartiningrum and Nugroho (2020) suggest incorporating students' personal and academic preferences in online EFL instruction. However, the present study only mentions a teacher's task addressing students' personal interests at a group level, highlighting the need for such activities.

The beginner level teacher tackled a challenge by breaking down tasks into manageable units for her students. This approach, as suggested by Sivachenko and Nedashkivska (2021), helps students engage in remote language instruction. Teachers ensured a safe learning environment by presenting relevant activities, promoting students' needs, interests, and goals, considering mixed-ability classes, providing scaffolds, showing personal interest, and using humor. These practices align with Chakraborty & Muya Nafukho (2014) and Kolesnikova (2021)'s emphasis on creating a positive learning environment.

The study found that learners' autonomy was enhanced by encouraging initiative and creativity, allowing students to choose task topics, and allowing them to organize and distribute responsibilities in groups. Advanced students found this beneficial for their engagement in remote language learning. Teachers working with intermediate learners also reported improved engagement when they perceived autonomy in completing tasks. This highlights the importance of fostering autonomy in remote language learning (Sivachenko & Nedashkivska, 2021).

Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) found that EFL teachers face challenges in involving students with low English proficiency in synchronous and asynchronous assignments. Two teachers mentioned the difficulty of integrating engagement facilitators like challenge, autonomy, and social interaction into task elements. The first required extensive planning, supervision, and intervention. The second was difficult for beginner students, as they struggled with decision-making activities. The third was due to some students not feeling comfortable using English. Another participant noted that their poor English level limited the type of activities they could work with, resulting in less language task engagement. The study suggests that learners' proficiency levels influence teachers' decisions to prepare activities with integrated facilitators, affecting students' task engagement during lessons.

The integration of engagement facilitators in language learning is not limited by students' proficiency level (Egbert et al., 2021). To promote engagement and avoid negative feelings like embarrassment, stress, and anxiety, teachers should include relevant learning activities and be aware of students' proficiency levels (Sivachenko & Nedashkivska, 2021). Teachers in this study noted that in remote classes, presenting learning activities at the precise level of

challenge, such as topics, grammar, and vocabulary, is challenging; therefore, they must proactively monitor students' progress and assist those struggling with their activities to ensure effective teaching.

During the pandemic, global studies revealed challenges in integrating engagement facilitators like authenticity, learning support, and social interaction into online and remote learning tasks (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dempsey & Burke, 2021). Teachers reported difficulties in delivering authentic tasks due to time and preparation requirements, making it impractical to integrate these facilitators in this learning modality, which is consistent with Dempsey & Burke's (2021) study. These authors highlight the challenges faced by teachers in promoting social interaction in online and remote learning due to the difficulty in encouraging peer and group work, and students' unwillingness to turn on their cameras. Teachers initially struggled to engage with students due to their lack of camera and microphone access, and some students' low English proficiency. Collaborative work implementation was also challenging, as students often refused to cooperate with peers or form groups with certain classmates. The pandemic has also highlighted the challenges in promoting learning support, providing additional explanations and guidance, and delivering timely feedback (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dempsey & Burke, 2021). The three Junior High School teachers expressed concerns about students who needed extra help to complete assignments and work in class.

Teachers face challenges in their classes, not all of which are due to the learning modality itself. Some of these difficulties may be present in face-to-face settings, as they involve integrating engagement facilitators into task components. Integrating authenticity into tasks is challenging due to cultural differences and the need for coursebooks with unfamiliar topics. Teachers also face challenges in integrating authenticity, social interaction, and relating students' personal interests to lesson topics and tasks, which require creativity and thinking.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show how student task engagement was approached by a group of teachers in remote language learning during the pandemic. Their statements indicate that these conceptions guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of learning tasks that are aimed at sustaining engagement in learning settings (Berry, 2019; Fredricks, 2016; Harris, 2011). They reported the use of varied strategies and learning activities in remote classes that were chosen based on the preferences and abilities of their students in order to foster task engagement. However, as recent studies indicate (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dempsey & Burke, 2021; Trinidad, 2021), they also experienced challenges of different nature that affected their efforts to sustain this engagement; it was observed that some of these issues are typical of remote instruction, others were exacerbated by the pandemic situation, and others were related to the complexities of integrating engagement facilitators into task components.

The procedures employed in this investigation also demonstrate how the Model of Language Task Engagement proposed by Egbert et. al (2021) can be used as a reference framework to study different aspects of task engagement in language learning. Results in this study might contribute to existing literature about the perspectives of teachers concerning student engagement considering such perspectives are thought to guide classroom decisions and strategies in the classroom in order to facilitate student engagement (Berry, 2019; Harris, 2011). This study also provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their perspectives about student task engagement and to consider the integration of engagement facilitators in their teaching practices in the future. (Egbert et al., 2021) The model of language task engagement used for this study might also benefit university education students by directing

their attention to this theoretical framework so that they could also become familiar with the importance of task engagement in language learning. The model presented in this study as well as its findings may inform future research and practice, especially considering the importance of creating spaces where scholars, teachers and students may discuss and share knowledge about strategies to promote task engagement in language learning.

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Amplifying English Language Teachers' in-betweenness of their experiences in peace construction

Amplificando el estado de estar entre dos realidades o
identidades de los profesores de inglés en sus
experiencias en la construcción de paz

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ABSTRACT

Peace studies and Applied Linguistics (AL) to English language teaching complement each other. In the second field, domains such as peace linguistics appear. This manuscript contributes to this de-instrumentalized field and its domain. This inquiry approached English language teachers' experiences in peace construction from diverse Colombian territories where dehumanizing practices perpetuate. Some formal proposals towards peace constrain English language teachers' agencies and bodies. However, their alternative positions, and doings in peace construction otherwise, transcend instrumental goals of the liberal peace. This study amplified English language teachers' voices to access their experiences from decolonial postures critically nuanced. Theoretical foundations conceptually discuss peace construction, experiences, and voices. This qualitative inquiry problematized narrative design and decolonial doing to create a methodological option called Otherwise Intuitive Undoings (OIUs). Its constitutive decisions were multimodal encountering, and comaking resenses to react to traditional data analysis. This intersected narrative analysis and crystallization to challenge rational treatments of what mainstream researchers demand as data analysis. Findings amplify spiritual sensing-thinking from English language teachers' experiences in-between, which characterize for their dynamics and discontinuities. Third spaces herein constitute places where pluridimensional experiences occur, and bodies-selves transform through an acquired elasticity. Disruptive knowings, becomings, and doings in peace construction reflected the creative power of English language teachers' bodies-selves. Note that the methodological option represents a contribution herein, crafted throughout the path. OIUs became an option in a line of flight that resisted some de-humanizing research principles, while resulting from English language teachers' engagement with methodological decisions. Conclusions and implications synthesize systemic relationships among peace studies and AL to ELT for inspiring researchers. Third spaces from English language teachers' amplified experiences deserve re-existence. Precisely, hearing our already existing voices, –as claimed in this study from the beginning–, rather than voicing the marginalized or the inexistent, opens a neglected debate about ethics in decolonial and critical postures.

Keywords: peace construction; in-betweenness; voices; experiences; English language teachers; decoloniality.

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RESUMEN

Los estudios de paz y la enseñanza del inglés se apoyan y complementan mutuamente. En efecto, la lingüística aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés incorpora dominios como la lingüística de paz. Este artículo contribuye al campo y dominio mencionados como escenarios desinstrumentalizados. Específicamente, se abordaron las experiencias de los profesores de inglés en la construcción de paz desde diferentes territorios colombianos donde varias prácticas deshumanizantes persisten mediante conflictos distintos. Algunas propuestas formales para la construcción de paz limitan las agencias y cuerpos de los maestros de inglés desde sus territorios. No obstante, sus posiciones alternativas y los conocimientos derivados de sus experiencias al construir paz sobrepasan los propósitos de la paz liberal. Este trabajo amplificó las voces de profesores de inglés para acceder a sus experiencias desde posturas decoloniales con matices críticos. Los fundamentos teóricos discuten conceptualmente la construcción de paz, las experiencias y las voces. Esta investigación cualitativa problematizó el diseño narrativo y el hacer decolonial para crear una opción metodológica denominada: Des-haceres intuitivos otros. Las decisiones constitutivas de esta opción incluyeron los encuentros multimodales como un recurso para la co-construcción de conocimientos (Aldana, 2022), y la co-elaboración de sentidos otros como una alternativa ante procesos canónicos del análisis de datos –en el lenguaje de la investigación tradicional–. Esta consistió en la interseccionalidad entre algunos principios del diseño narrativo y la cristalización para tensionar el tratamiento racional de aquello que la investigación moderna entiende como datos y su análisis. En los hallazgos, los sentipensares espirituales se discuten desde las experiencias amplificadas de los maestros de inglés en sus terceros espacios caracterizados por sus dinanismos y discontinuidades. Dichos espacios entre-medios constituyen terceros espacios donde ocurren experiencias pluridimensionales silenciadas de los profesores de inglés y se transforman sus cuerpos elásticos. Diversos conocimientos disruptivos, posiciones y haceres en la construcción de paz reflejaron el poder creativo de las subjetividades de los profesores de inglés y su corporeidad. Cabe subrayar que la opción metodológica propuesta constituye una contribución de este estudio elaborada en el camino. Esta propuesta en fuga resiste la investigación cualitativa tradicional, y emergió del entretejer investigativo para abordar la sub-pregunta acerca de las reacciones e involucramiento de los profesores en las decisiones metodológicas en este estudio. Las conclusiones e implicaciones reiteran las relaciones sistémicas entre los estudios de paz y la lingüística aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés desde la lingüística de paz y las experiencias, en tanto fuentes relacionales de conocimientos otros. Los terceros espacios desde las experiencias audibles de los profesores de inglés merecen re-existir en el campo. Justamente, amplificar nuestras ya existentes voces –como se propuso en este trabajo desde su emergencia–, en lugar de otorgar una voz al marginalizado o lo inexistente, sugiere la apertura a un debate descuidado sobre las éticas en las posturas decoloniales y críticas.

Palabras clave: construcción de paz; entre-medios; voces; experiencias; profesores de inglés; decolonialidad.

Introduction

Peace studies as an interdisciplinary field entails *inter-epistemic dialogues* with areas, including theology, history, sociology, politics, economics, and Applied Linguistics (AL) to English Language Teaching (ELT). Although the last field involves neoliberal and instrumental ends (Aldana, 2021a; Hurie, 2018), its reach extends into re-humanization. English language teachers relate research and pedagogical practices to extra-linguistic purposes such as peace construction (peace studies' core); however, their experiences are silenced. This inquiry attempts to co-understand English language teachers' experiences behind peace construction in-between. Emerging *knowledges* (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) derive from embodied intersectionality, involving multifaceted lived phenomena.

In the next sections, a theoretical discussion on relevant concepts unfolds as a reflection on peace construction, experiences and voices. This supports the possible but denied relationality between peace studies and AL to ELT. Afterwards, the methodology crafted, which problematizes taken-for-granted strategies in qualitative research, appears (Aldana, 2022). This study's methodological decisions deem horizontality and embodiment relevant to create spaces for harvesting knowledges, beyond collecting (mining) or analyzing them. It smoothed the creation of the Otherwise Intuitive Undosings (OIUs) as an option for inquiring that denaturalizes rational philosophical frameworks of educational qualitative research (Aldana, 2022).

Findings sense-think English language teachers' elastic subjectivities when their bodies transited throughout pluridimensional experiences in third spaces. Amplifying these teachers' voices to co-understand their experiences made their productive tensions and struggles in-between not only visible but sensed. These teachers challenged instructor and constructor roles, when living creative resistances (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) differently. This study approached an everlasting in-betweenness where diverse teachers' beings, knowings, and doings (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) were produced. Within third spaces, "an other" (Mignolo, 2012, p. 66) roles and experiences reflected *pluriversal* life positions. Third spaces were relational to these teachers' elastic selves. Indeed, neither in-betweenness nor OIUs were prescriptively created through dichotomies. Herein, these teachers' third spaces are "not simply one thing or the other, nor both at the same time, but a kind of negotiation between both positions" (Bhabha, as cited in Byrne, 2009, p. 42). Recalling Bhabha (as cited in Byrne, 2009), they entail "doubleness or splitting of the subject" (p. 42). In-betweenness of these teachers' different communal experiences in peace construction displayed multidirectional movements. This inquiry sensed-thought third spaces (in-betweenness), respecting their complexity, hybridity and dynamics (Bhabha, 2004).

The ongoing methodological decisions (OIUs) in this inquiry represent crafted results, explained in the crafting box given their methodological nature. This option responds to the subquestion addressing *how* English language teachers felt this study's methodological (who-how) decisions. Thus, these teachers inspired methodological decisions, which constituted disruptive participation herein (Aldana, 2022). The resulting OIUs as a peace-driven option sought co-existence (reciprocity), rather than denying available methodologies; it resists colonizing (silencing) logics. OIUs are neither a finished option, nor another recipe for educational inquiry in ELT. Everlasting adjustments subject to re-shaping are expected in contexts where they become relevant.

In this spirit, conclusions and implications synthesize English language teachers' embodied experiences in peace construction from third spaces to underscore intersectionality between AL to ELT and peace studies as interdependent fields. This alliance allowed for resignifying lived (created) experiences in-between. Various implications are discussed, suggesting a neglected ethical debate in decolonial postures critically nuanced within ELT.

Theoretical background

A De-instrumentalizing departure

Discussing theoretical concepts entails interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity for AL to ELT and peace studies relationality. The modern mode of objectification that assigns disciplines a monolithic interest (Foucault, 1982) produces reductionist readings of life complexities (Maldonado, 2021). Counteracting, hybrid dialogical ways to read our worlds appear: *interdisciplinarity* and *transdisciplinarity*. The former urges connections among disciplines (Maldonado, 2021), and the latter favors disciplines' interactions towards reciprocal transformations, since boundaries disappear (Maldonado, 2021). Namely, multidisciplinary is insufficient for inquiring; transformative interactions among knowledges, methodologies and bodies address wholeness (Morin & Delgado, 2014). Sanitizing disciplines hinders transdisciplinarity especially.

Consequently, I resist purist epistemological positioning (Aldana, 2022) as though it were a monolithic option to select and watch out. From the first time I problematized my body-self concerning interpretive frameworks (Cresswell, 2018), an ethical/political decision was crafted: I felt decolonial postures mattered if articulating critical perspectives. Questions of

power (e.g., inequalities, injustice, hegemony, domination...) were tackled, without ignoring social and epistemological inexistence (forced disappearance). Critical and decolonial postures are complementary (Aldana, 2022). This epistemological cooperation re-humanized this inquiry by transcending the attitude of selecting/taking trendy decisions. Although some academists framed this inquiry within decoloniality only, even when epistemological *mestizaje* was openly supported (Aldana, 2021a, 2022), I contest it through weaving critical and decolonial relationalities where their differences become contributions, rather than warnings. Research decisions, including epistemological ones, are *created* more than selected.

Peace construction in ELT: A peace linguistics becoming

Towards re-humanizing AL, English language teachers embark on extralinguistic journeys. English *becomes* a tool to approach sociocultural realities in a discipline de-instrumentalized through interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. Extralinguistic goals from critical and decolonial postures encompass phenomena as social justice or peace construction, which are different but relational. The former constitutes the counter-conduct to social injustice in dialectical relationships (Freire, 2015). Social justice combines epistemological sovereignty and cognitive justice (De Sousa-Santos, 2018). Therein, the oppressed, and leaders (educators) engage in solidarity struggles for humanization (Freire, 2015) towards sociocultural impact on societal institutions, including education. Contrastively, peace construction pursues more than absolute harmony as opposed to direct violence (Galtung, 2016), and social injustice. Constructing peace becomes a multifaceted concern, process, and experience towards diverse beings' co-existence.

Peace construction diversities produce plural opportunities for AL to ELT to join its configuration through a long trajectory domain called *peace linguistics*. It problematizes language use, since it is neglected in peace studies research (Curtis, 2018). Gomes de Matos (as cited in Curtis, 2018) asserts peace linguistics examines “how people could and should communicate with each other in ways that are respectful, compassionate and peaceable” (p. 3) to avoid violence. When Gomes de Matos (2018, p. 290) distinguishes “communicating about peace” from “communicating peacefully”, languages seem constitutive to peace construction. Other than reified linguistic systems, they become resources mediating peace-driven communication towards social rapport. Namely, the linguistic dimension of languages remains, but its purpose is re-humanized.

Peace linguistics in AL to ELT poses this question: “[h]ow can language users and methods-materials for language education be further humanized linguistically?” (Gomes de Matos, 2014, p. 416). This question relates peace and language to didactic decisions. *Re-humanizing* ELT through the language of peace assists learners to *become* peace language users (Oxford et al., 2018). Peace linguistics overlaps nonkilling linguistics, which advocates languages use “in all their peace-making potential” (Friedrich & Gomes de Matos, 2012, p. 17). It disrupts coded violence since conflicts could be solved through language that avoids harm (Gomes de Matos, 2014; Friedrich & Gomes de Matos, 2012). Communicative dignity and a nonkilling mentality can guide interactions using languages (Friedrich, 2012). Peace linguistics in AL incorporates uncertain open-endedness and hybridity (Bhabha, 2004), which make it a domain becoming in flux where “static meanings or essences” (Ellingson, 2017, p. 7) are problematized.

Experiences and voices: more than trendy concepts

From its beginning, this inquiry manifested an interest and curiosity regarding *experiences* and *voices*. Although we, as English language teachers, had various stories about what we lived and created in peace construction, we felt unauthorized to *pronounce* them. When interacting with teachers who collaborated in this inquiry, voices and experiences became relevant. They were more than prescribed theories or trendy utilitarian concepts for reifying trivial purposes. This study challenges the fetishization of these concepts to resist instrumentalizing agendas (Larrosa, 2006).

In this spirit, those concepts and methodological tools were problematized. One commonality is their inclusion in traditional, critical, and postcolonial research. Their use is not exclusive to transformative frameworks and qualitative research. Experiences and voices as research interests occur in diverse research; the difference is their conceptualization, which varies from instrumental to re-humanized. These concepts' ubiquity across scholarship justifies their relevance.

Some particularities inside *experiences* concept occur. The scientific method and postpositivism approach the *experience* –in singular– rationally as a mechanism for hypotheses' verification (Bunge, 2013). This *experience* is captured through observation (Bunge, 2013), as though it happened in subjects' outside realms. When the experience occurs inside, it is described as “personal experience in the form of common-sense knowing” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 4) to adjust through reasoning (Bunge, 2013). Thereby, this concept is reduced to an abstract account of events rationally observed in a setting.

Alternative conceptualizations about *experiences* –pluralized– resist postpositivist versions. The sociology of experience (Dubet, 2010) explains a transition from action to experience occurs, while social and critical factors intersect in its *construction*. Then, lived experiences constitute created experiences, because approaching our lives therein entails creativity. These are produced than simply appearing in exteriorities, the places of experiences are our bodies (Larrosa, 2006). Co-understanding experiences demands sensitiveness to multifaceted relationships between fluctuating sociocultural settings, and alive bodies-selves participating in their representation and transformation (Freire, 2019).

Thus, decolonizing *experiences* concept implied critical nuances. Freire (2019) argues experiences ground in everyday life. Consequently, sociocultural phenomena, including power issues, are relational to experiences. Marginalization, domination, empowerment, emancipation and resistance appear in the critical study of experiences (Freire & Macedo, 2011). Interestingly, Larrosa (2006), Freire and Macedo (2011) remark educators' role in transforming experiences even outside schools. Experiences are subject of transformation while changing those who live them (Larrosa, 2006; Freire, 2019).

Problematizing experiences concept softly hints the *voices* notion. As experiences comprise linguistic, communicative, sociopolitical and cultural phenomena (e.g., *silencing*), *voices* became consubstantial to them, producing embodiment. Voices are material channels to access experiences, constituting another interdisciplinary concern in humans' lives. De Sousa-Santos (2018) considers diverse voices coexist with the unpronounceable. Guha (2002) underscores *small voices* of oppressed groups to struggle “against oppression and domination in the world at large” (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 12). Besides physical waves in our phonoarticulator system, *voices* resonate power uses/abuses, when turned up, down or silenced.

Pluralizing *voices* challenges its trendy homogenizing use. Since teachers are complex and diverse, the *voice* requires pluralization as social justice (De Sousa-Santos, 2018). Guha

(2002) and De Sousa-Santos (2018) acknowledge multiple voices, including the oppressed ones. Guha (2002) names these voices *small*, because they are in the civil society “drowned in the noise of statist commands” (p. 307). Nonetheless, these small voices are diverse, complex, and insurgent; their owners have stories to tell, even when silenced (Guha, 2002). De Sousa-Santos (2018) invites us to hear “stifled voices of the oppressed, to whom only subaltern orality was generally available” (p. 61). The voice of authority exerts hierarchical “power of arms” over voices of suffering whose “power of truth” makes themselves heard (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 92).

Crafting a tool box

When problematizing qualitative research (Aldana, 2022), critical and decolonial postures smoothed its de-monumentalization (De Sousa-Santos, 2018). It unnaturalizes qualitative research principles enacting inequalities and colonial mechanisms, which disappear alternative beings, knowings, and doings. The subject-object relationships and extractivism as latent principles persist in qualitative research (Aldana, 2022; Vasilachis, 2009), constituting a colonial matrix. Problematizing certain principles of narrative inquiry and the decolonial doing informed the *Otherwise Intuitive Undoings* (OIUs) whose characteristics and decisions (Aldana, 2022) are crafted, and discussed next.

In OIUs, English language teachers re-existed towards cognitive and social justice (De Sousa-Santos, 2018). One decision in OIUs consisted of inviting teachers to decide how they wanted to be invoked, rather than assigning them a label. This contributes to re-humanize methodological decisions *made together*, horizontally, towards non-dehumanizing research (Ortiz et al., 2018). Rooted in Ubuntu wisdom (Msila, 2015), OIUs resignified methodology as “who/how” decisions (Aldana, 2022, p. 133). They remark *collective* relationality (interconnectedness, togetherness...), and life complexity.

Unexpected interactions happened with English language teachers as known subjects and knowers simultaneously (Vasilachis 2009; Aldana, 2022) in OIUs. These teachers shared their experiences in peace construction and who-how decisions through modes permanently crafted. We decided it for feeling instrumentalized in previous research and pedagogical work. Known subjects and knowers proposed interactions in OIUs. Sharing power yielded emerging “sites of [border] co-constitutive interaction” (Bruyneel, 2007, p. xix), creative co-production of knowledges (De Sousa-Santos, 2018), and contestation (Butler, 1995).

Collaborators were seven, and they displayed characteristics that made them relevant guests. They are Colombian in-service English language teachers with peace construction proposals inside urban and semi-urban territories. These teachers were willing to share their *particular* stories behind peace construction. They lived in formal and informal scenarios, which silenced their inspiring experiences. This inquiry problematized *overgeneralizations* about them to resist essentializations (Aldana, 2022).

In OIUs, a resource to co-construct knowledges was proposed, and transformed from multimodal *encounters* to *encountering* (Aldana, 2022). Notwithstanding their relationship to *data collection methods*, multimodal encounters/encountering as *resources* keep critical differences from the former. They resignify communication relationships in qualitative research where *who* and *how* were relational to make encountering a re-humanized decision for co-constructing knowledges (Aldana, 2022), beyond recipes-driven and extractivist/hierarchical methods. Indeed, we created a linguistic reference to power sharing when alternately proposing interaction possibilities for encountering. The *baton* became the word herein that indicated *who* orchestrated them. That who-how decision of this study

decentralizes power, while creating languages to resignify transformed interactions. *Camaraderie* therein produced feelings of *ableness* and *freedom* absent in hegemonic methods. It contested subject-object relationships, and permitted who-how decisions to emerge (Vasilachis, 2009; Aldana, 2022). When problematizing and counter-reacting to canonical research through multimodal encountering, closeness, reciprocity, horizontality, affective safety, semiotic convergence, and complementarity became crucial for co-constructing knowledges (De Sousa-Santos, 2018; Mignolo, 2012; Aldana, 2022) inside OIUs as methodological disobedience to research colonialities.

Multimodal encounters/encountering differ from interviews and narratives of mainstream qualitative narrative designs, which subtly privilege rationality, hierarchy and semiotic isolation. Narrative inquiry in the epistemologies of the North ignores the “body in all its emotional and affective density”, objectifying and making it an absent presence (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 88). Modernity remains in narrative inquiry, when coding *body* in singular (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Hence, “the body as an ur-narrative, a somatic narrative that precedes and sustains the narratives of which the body speaks or writes” (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 88) is missing. Narrative inquiry supports the OIUs, but colonial heritage in the former constrains embodiment sensed (produced) in this inquiry.

Thereby, decolonizing methodologies such as the decolonial doing (Ortiz et al., 2018) gained relevance. Albeit problematizing the colonial background of research (Tuhawai, 2021) in social studies, and resignifying it as *doing* allow for approaching social realities (Ortiz et al., 2018), modern heritage persists. Decolonizing notions for inquiring our worlds/realities could not deny existing research theory. Pluriversality favors “decolonization, creolization, or *mestizaje* through intercultural translation” to avoid massive epistemicide (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 8). A radical boundary between mainstream qualitative research with its language, and decolonial options, would craft another masked modernity, which is far from coexistence inside pluriversality (De Sousa-Santos, 2018). Decolonial doing could harness and add the *with*, when advocating proposals otherwise in/from/by/for their contexts of emergence (Ortiz et al., 2018). Consequently, the monolithic discourse behind the decolonial *doing* reverses, while pluralizing it, and embracing undoing (De Sousa-Santos, 2018).

Problematizing qualitative research *data analysis* underscored creation. Conventionally, that stage demands the researcher –usually alone– to interpret data towards the so-called analysis categories (Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). It depends on researchers’ interpretive frameworks/positionings (Creswell, 2018), and approaches to apply therein. However, the same purpose to do something with data endures: *analysis*. Furthermore, modern academies demand this decision before collecting data, for their research rigidity and linearity (Aldana, 2022). Qualitative inquiry as living (Aldana, 2022) resignified data analysis as *comaking resenses* to complement who-how decisions inside OIUs. It materialized both simultaneously and after co-constructing knowledges in multimodal encountering(s).

Comaking resenses differs from data analysis. First, the collective nature of *comaking* made it a shared process with English language teachers, when resignifying/interpreting our experiences herein. Second, it avoided dissecting/separating experiences in peace construction, in contrast to patterning data analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). Thirdly, creation/creativity supported comaking resenses, as knowledges otherwise were crystallized (Ellingson, 2017). Crystallized products included a comic (multimodal) book linked to some videos, and recorded re-storying in a radio station.

Finally, another who-how decision in OIUs supported comaking resenses, namely *garabatear*. It combined doodling and drawing in a personal journal to express our sensations

around multimodal encountering(s) once finished. This who-how decision arose when extra experiences required attention. *Garabatear* has psychological, linguistic, and sociocultural connotations. Psychologically, *garabatear* describes children's development stages when playing with written and visual languages (drawing) (Buffone, 2023). Moreover, it supports teaching towards comprehension and creativity (Cantón, 2017). Culturally, it evokes the *Garabato* dance during carnivals in Colombian Caribbean territories. Although a universal history on its origin is unattainable, this dance relates to afro communities in colonial slavery, and a peasant dance (Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, 2020). This colorful danced fight between life and death represents black slaves mocking their masters, and own disgrace. Sadness, happiness, irony, sarcasm, and creativity characterize this dance where life overcomes death (Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, 2020). *Garabatear* for comaking resenses made tensions and struggles louder, while empowering our creative selves.

Findings

Amplifying our in-betweenness

This inquiry aimed at co-understanding English language teachers' experiences in peace construction. Some spiritual sensing-thinking –*sentipensares espirituales*– (Fals-Borda, 2015) after comaking resenses are discussed as knowledges otherwise from resignified bodies-selves and experiences. Unlike reified rational categories, these knowledges (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) problematized modern separations of mind and body to co-understand what English language teachers lived when “acting with the heart using the head” (Fals-Borda, as cited in Botero-Gómez, 2019, p. 302) in-between, considering their amplified voices.

Spiritual sensing and knowing (Mignolo, 2011), feeling-thinking (Palacios, 2019), or sensing/thinking (Pinheiro-Barbosa, 2020), as translations of *sentipensar* and *sentipensante* (Fals-Borda, 2015), are geopolitically situated herein. Colombian violence(s) and aftermath affect English language teachers' territories directly and indirectly. Although no official date indicates the start of Colombian violence, scholars agree it began on April 9th, 1948, when Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a presidential candidate, was murdered. It triggered conflicts between the Liberal and Conservative parties during a long wave of violence. Nowadays, these political ideologies manifest through different parties whose conflict remains, hurting social leaders and activists (INDEPAZ, 2023).

Living constitutive tensions in third spaces: becoming instructors or constructors?

Hearing experiences behind peace construction in ELT amplified everyday (pedagogical) practices and attached becomings. Liberal peace establishes fixed knowing, being and doing for English language teachers. Despite power institutional structures such as the Ministry of Education (MEN), UNESCO, the British Council, or the Centro de Memoria Histórica (CMH), these teachers *become* authors of resistances (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) to construct peace, and differently *becoming* in those third spaces. However, they overlap non-being zones (Fanon, 2010), even when producing relevant knowledges in flux (De Sousa-Santos, 2018).

Peacebuilding, peace education, and English for peace constitute formal proposals on peace as citizenship, human rights, conflict resolution, and the opposite to war (Aldana, 2021b). Notwithstanding formal peace grounds in good-practices (instrumental), and universalizing discourses to shape teachers' beings and pedagogical practices (Aldana, 2021a) in first spaces,

English language teachers challenge them (Excerpt 1), moving to lines of flight, leaving instructor roles.

Excerpt 1

I feel I instruct peace when I must teach contents, considering the Chair in peace, and UNESCO's toolbox for peace education. However, I sometimes adjust these guidelines to feel freer, as a creator or constructor of peace with students. Illustrating, I don't teach human rights contents only, but I address them regarding the Nature's rights for living differently. We developed projects about our concern and love towards the environments where we live.

English language teachers produce in-between sites (Bhabha, 2004) where they resist and co-exist (Walsh, 2017) transcending epistemological obedience. These teachers construct knowledges from their interstitial positions (Bhabha, as cited in Byrne, 2009). In excerpt 1, this teacher understands the formal role (instructor) demanded to adopt overgeneralizing toolboxes. However, his decision about *adapting* institutionalized guidelines reflects a political claim of his right and capacity to create collective alternatives (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) towards peace. Collective interests challenge hierarchies in ELT third spaces (Excerpt 1) and liberal peace (Fontan, 2013).

Tensions when experiencing peace construction in-between instructor, and constructor/creator positions implied an emotional cost to English language teachers. An affective dimension (Benesch, 2012) of embodied experiences becomes louder. When advised to assume one role, a teacher expressed her emotional reaction (Excerpt 2), underlining her sensitiveness to violence, which fueled her empowering emotionality. Despite the *rational* peace educator and sanitizer –in liberal peace (Fontan, 2013)–, or the peaceful teacher of the XXI century (Aldana, 2021a), these teachers' emotivities yield power moves (Benesch, 2012). It explains why the rational peace educator seems unauthorized to feel (Benesch, 2012), even when peace involves an inner dimension claiming embodiment (Aldana, 2021b; Ellingson, 2017).

Excerpt 2

I couldn't be only an instructor or an educator. I was shocked when my colleagues told me to play one role, and it wasn't necessarily the latter. But this combination of panic, surprise, loneliness, stress, bitterness... urged me to continue with this peace initiative. I realized listening to students' stories was a powerful start.

The political side of teachers' emotivities (Benesch, 2017) supports resistances (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) in-between as scenarios of contestation (Bruyneel, 2007) to liberal peace. Third spaces constituted places to re-create peace construction and English language teachers' roles through proposals such as communitarian pots (Excerpt 3). When adapting more than adopting liberal peace, teachers' emotions in silence and socially unjust situations (Excerpt 2) moved them. Their voices amplified affective forces making them transit throughout selves that involved "modes of being, including emotional comportments, expressions, postures, movements and touch" (Ellingson, 2017, p. 86). Experiencing the instructors-becoming demand provoked a re-humanizing need in-between to intersect diverse positions. These transcended the instructor and constructor/educator tension. Next lines deepen this in-betweenness (Bhabha, as cited in Byrne, 2009).

Excerpt 3

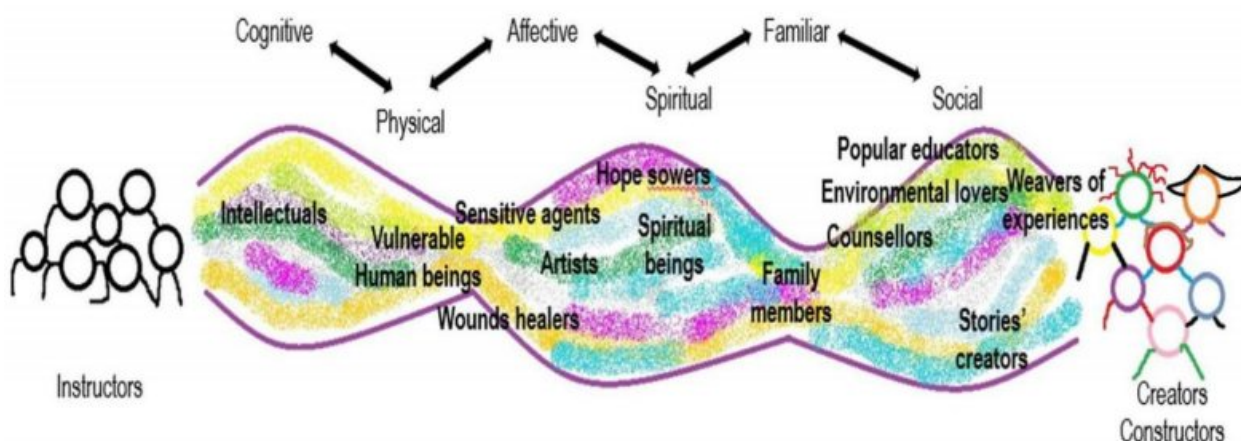
Although colleagues told me not to do it [the communitarian pot], students and the community members participated. Dancing, food, and the school batucada appealed more neighbors to collaborate. I was delighted.

Living in-between instructors or creators

Amplifying English language teachers’ experiences lets us resignify tensions within third spaces where they challenged rational being, knowing, and doing (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) in peace construction (Aldana, 2022). In-between, teachers’ knowings, doings, and becomings in flux (Ellingson, 2017) produced hybridity. Their bodies-selves moving in-between instructors and constructors (Figure 1) challenge dichotomies through multidirectional movements towards lines of flight (Ellingson, 2017). These teachers’ experiences in peace construction were pluridimensional and interdependent. Tensions were constitutive and relational to complex selves in-between (Excerpt 1).

Dual and negative meanings of tensions (McDonough, 2017) vanished in third spaces. Tensions became constitutive in pluridimensional experiences, which made teachers’ selves (subjectivities) elastic, while bodies moved (Webber, 2012). Experiences in peace construction encompassed multifaceted “borderline existences” (Byrne, 2009, p.127) that exceeded Cartesian rational subjects (De Sousa-Santos, 2018), and the instructor-creator tension. They arose and intersected through action and embodiment. Figure 1 displays these teachers’ bodies-selves in peace construction across louder experiences. Next lines sense-think them in third spaces (in-betweenness), challenging normalized violence-driven (Padilla & Bermúdez, 2016) silencing mechanisms. Transitional leaps/moves articulate these teachers’ embodied experiences in peace construction.

Figure 1. English teachers’ elastic selves in-between



Teachers' transitional selves are relational to their multifaceted experiences within complex territories. In Excerpt 4, this teacher became a counselor inside familial and intergenerational conflicts at the school. This teacher invited her student to reflect empathetically about her mother, and created a values seedbed with students where she was a popular educator, but she felt as a social values promoter, and a learner. As a sower of social values seeds in her peace construction experiences, her third space let her recycle resources from first (her and students' families, sociocultural surroundings) and second spaces (educational environment) towards her students' welfare.

Excerpt 4

I told this student to understand her mother. What her mother did was not appropriate, but she could think for a while how her mother was educated as a child... In this values seedbed, I felt as learning from students.

These teachers experienced different *becomings* as *fugitive selves* (Asenbaum, 2021), while jumping in-between throughout sites of contestation (Butler, 1995). In peace construction otherwise, these teachers embodied it across pluridimensional experiences. Their voices (excerpts 5 and 6) challenge dichotomous experiences (mind-feeling), for additional embodiments to amplify such as spiritual and physical ones (Ellingson, 2017). Again, forces moved teachers' bodies, making their selves elastic across pluridimensional experiences. A teacher experienced struggles (excerpt 5) concerning the anthropocentric, non-spiritual, rational subject privilege in modernity where separating science, art and spirituality towards sanitization (Ellingson, 2017) prevails. In Excerpt 5, AR's voice suggests English language teachers' spiritualities seem forbidden (e.g., Christianity). It restates peace construction occurs in disembodied ELT academies. UB and AR (Excerpt 5) shared their spirituality, and experienced scorn for it, when constructing peace. Stigmatization towards teachers intersects spiritual, racial, gendered, cultural, epistemological, and disciplinary selves.

Excerpt 5

AR: Criticism for being an English teacher who constructs peace is not enough; further reasons appear: my condition as a Christian.

UB: Really? I lived something similar... Besides, some demanded me to be a model of perfection just for researching upon peace. I got so stressed that I did meditation.

Likewise, experiences in peace construction are physically and psychologically enfolded through English language teachers' material bodies in-between. In excerpt 6, SS relates students' structurally violent (Galtung, 2016) experiences to her physical and mental health. These teachers lived anxiety, sadness, and frustration for contextual and institutional constraints (Excerpt 1, Excerpt 6). Their emotionalities (Benesch, 2012) moved teachers in-between, producing physical and psychological experiences (Excerpt 6). When constructing peace in ELT, teachers' "consciousness is always and only embodied, holistically integrated into the enfolded subject" (Ellingson, 2017, p. 16). Namely, "[b]eing and knowing cannot be easily separated" (Ellingson, 2017, p. 16). Dichotomies for explaining third spaces produce trivial reductionist understandings of experiences (Aldana, 2022) in peace construction.

Excerpt 6

SS: Once I heard they [students] were in illegal groups, I felt worried, sad, and even physically exhausted. I came back home with a terrible headache.

Similarly, English language teachers lived stereotypes in third spaces. UB (excerpt 5) felt marked through overgeneralizing images about peace researchers as superhumans who never have conflicts. An objectifying mechanism homogenizes teachers in peace construction, drawing on de-humanizing neocolonial discourses. Rather, teachers are alive and feel emotions such as anger (Excerpt 5), or even get sick (Excerpt 6). These teachers' bodies and vulnerability seem denied (Ellingson, 2017). Universalizing liberal peace (Fontan, 2013) reappears to homogenize the white rational peaceful teacher of the XXI century (Aldana, 2021a).

Nevertheless, English language teachers' suffering experiences silenced (Excerpt 7) transform through teachers' creative power behind their elastic selves (Webber, 2012). This elasticity seems consubstantial to creative power behind alternative knowings and doings that mirror life and peace dynamics in counterspaces (Bhabha, 2004). These teachers' vulnerable selves aforementioned represented more than weakness; they became empowered and empathetic bodies-selves who creatively *moved* throughout pluridimensional experiences.

Excerpt 7

EO: We as teachers suffer in silence.

Considering AR's voice, his leaps intersected academic, familial and personal experiential dimensions (Ellingson, 2017). They articulated roles as a peace educator, healer, agent, father, neighbor, Nature caregiver, spiritual Christian teacher, and an artist. AR shared it, when re-signifying experiences behind his proposal called: *the Blue House*. Therein, peace construction as social justice reduced socioeconomic inequalities in the marginalized locality of his childhood (Excerpt 8). In-between, AR re-signified English as a right (Hult & Hornberger, 2016) that fosters peace construction, as long as its learning was guaranteed to everybody, regardless of socioeconomic status (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

AR: The idea that English learning is a right of everybody inspired this initiative. As I lived in a low socioeconomic status neighborhood, I wanted to help these children in similar conditions to have access to English. For me, it is social justice.

The abovementioned political side of spiritualities and emotions (Ellingson 2017), including those from suffering also works (Excerpt 9) towards re-humanizing empathy (Excerpt 8). More than putting ourselves on someone else's shoes, it consisted of placing ourselves on/in others' skins. The power of healing behind the word "scar" in UB's voice (Excerpt 9) reflects this embodied empathy in-between, which supports teachers' strength, sensitiveness and resilience for sensing others' skins. Teachers' bodies-selves gained elasticity throughout their suffering and healing experiences. Their bodies' outer and inner phenomena connected, when moving and making selves elastic (Excerpt 10).

Excerpt 9

UB: *This scar represents my students' suffering and mine, when seeking someone who supported us in our peace project, but also how we got stronger afterwards.*

Excerpt 10

SS: *As a teacher and a counsellor, I am in charge of myriad school issues. I have faced terrible situations, as the kid who committed suicide.*

English language teachers' experiences and creative knowledges under a low profile (in-between) deserve hearing towards alternative power uses. The creative power behind these teachers' selves made "an other" (Mignolo, 2012, p. 66) bodies possible in peace construction, challenging totality. I borrow the term *an other* from Mignolo (2012) to characterize this power. It provokes coexistence among ways of knowing, being and doing, embracing uncertain (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Savin-Baden & Howell, 2010; Aldana, 2022), ongoing, unfinished, and countless unmodern possibilities for pluriversal (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) living.

In-betweenness allows our experiences in peace construction to become relational. Beyond instructors and constructors/creators tensions, further selves and knowledges (De Sousa-Santos, 2018) intersected. These challenge colonialities of power, being and knowing (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007) that endure in *ELT* (Macedo, 2019), when instrumentalizing peace (Hurie, 2018; Aldana, 2021a). What is disruptive (Ellingson, 2017) about these third spaces is English language teachers' resistances and re-existences (Walsh, 2017) through their elastic *selves* in-between (Excerpt 10). Teachers' experiences involved their bodies moving, and selves' elastic transformations as non-prescribed (unimagined) roles in peace construction (Excerpt 10). Sensing-thinking these teachers' silenced experiences and elastic subjectivities (Butler, 1995) contests ELT colonialities.

Additionally, these teachers became *weavers of experiences* (Excerpt 11), and experiential layers. A *layer* means how someone relates to surroundings through mental holism (Geuter, 2016); English language teachers' experiences pluralized *layers*. These teachers weaved students' experiences for resignifying theirs when their bodies transited throughout life scenarios in-between, and selves became elastic (Excerpt 10). This spiritual sensing-thinking shows how relevant bodies-selves are for pluri-signifying our experiences. Unlike individually experiencing peace construction, a social dimension (Larrosa, 2006) of embodied *experiences* stands out in-between.

Excerpt 11

SS: *...This is like weaving our experiences. I remember one indigenous child who was pregnant, I felt touched by that. I talked with her about it. I don't know why it happens there. I knew about similar cases. I wasn't concerned with English merely, I wanted to change that.*

Teachers' elastic selves fluctuated to self-healers. They experienced struggles with social and disciplinary inequalities owing to objectification modes (Foucault, 1982) that "transform human beings into subjects" (p. 777), making knowledge a reified object. This "dividing practice" (Foucault, 1982, p. 777) produces wounds on teachers' bodies. The aftermath of multiple violence, e.g., structural (Galtung, 2016), and symbolic (Burawoy, 2019) exacerbated them. An English language teacher experienced violence as rejection, misrecognition and

loneliness (Excerpt 12) in her third space. Contrastively, another teacher's voice suggested healing became an *intersubjective* practice (Ellingson, 2017) when encountering (Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 12

UB: Hearing my colleagues frustrated me. I thought English language teachers would support me. But they didn't. They constantly questioned the relevance of peace in ELT. A science teacher was more willing to listen to me.

Excerpt 13

LN: In these encounters, I feel accompanied; I enjoy them. Even when recalling those difficult moments in peace construction, I don't feel the same.

Healing in English language teachers' third spaces also occurred when their elastic bodies-selves transited to healing roles. As social healers, teachers' interests and embodied empathy regarding social surroundings exemplify it, as AR's Blue House (Excerpt 8) representing his desire to live without social inequalities (Excerpt 11). This proposal about creating an English language institute for social justice implies an attitude otherwise towards the oppressed (Freire, 2019), through which educators as social healers assist transitions/movements of those placed in a nonbeing zone (Fanon, 2010) to re-exist (Walsh, 2017). As environmental healers, the Nature became an alive extension (Rocha-Buelvas & Ruiz-Lurduy, 2018) of teachers' bodies. In excerpt 1, this teacher expressed his and students' love towards the Nature described as holding rights. It challenges the modern living/non-living dichotomy that implies the human/non-human duality. This discourse manifests in Human rights as only protecting human beings at the expense of what is nonhuman (Singh, 2018). The teacher in excerpt 1 worked with students towards horizontal connections between natural and human worlds, being alive and deserving equal care and love.

Altogether, English language teachers' experiences and elastic bodies-selves (Figure 1) displayed their creative power in-between where dynamic knowings, becomings, and doings transformed. The elasticity of teachers' moving bodies-selves permitted pluridimensional experiences behind peace construction where creative power was productive for re-humanization. Teachers' roles and doings otherwise, beyond the liberal peace (Fontan, 2013), made their struggles, dilemmas, feelings, tensions, wishes, and further embodiment, sources of spiritual sensing-thinking. They "leave leeway for a significant [third space] of freedom and creativity" (De Sousa-Santos, 2018, p. 35) where these teachers resist and re-exist as weavers of experiences, spiritual beings, sowers of empathy, silenced resilient educators, healers of personal and social wounds, environmental lovers, counsellors, and peace constructors in Colombia.

Conclusions and implications: sensing/thinking the unfamiliar

This manuscript shared co-understandings around English language teachers' experiences in peace construction from in-betweenness where diverse bodies-selves intersected. These experiences occurred inside and outside classes, and decolonial postures critically nuanced allowed for amplifying them. Methodological insights and practical decisions problematized modern research principles to craft an option (OIUs) that contested mainstream qualitative research through intuitiveness, horizontality, affectivity, spirituality, and further embodied beliefs towards who-how decisions (multimodal encountering and

comaking resenses). Therein, we resignified experiences to crystallize them through a multimodal comic book.

Findings as spiritual sensing-thinking amplified communal third spaces where English language teachers' embodied experiences in peace construction integrated disruptive life-driven knowings, and creative power. They constituted complex sources of *re-humanizing* knowledges. Their hybridity, horizontality, non-linearity, and de-instrumentalization illustrate creative *coexistence* in everyday in-between pluridimensional experiences. Elastic bodies-selves moving there contribute to peace linguistics in AL to ELT epistemologically and methodologically (Aldana, 2021b) from their experiences and empowerment. Then, ethical commitments to construct peace(s) without ignoring experiences, but hearing them through teachers' existing voices fuels this sensitiveness to embodiment.

An implication invites the exploration of in-betweenness from wholeness (successful resistances, losses, pain, frustrations, markedness...) in vulnerable bodies-selves. Subsequent unlearnings and relearnings in peace construction become sources of political decisions to *encode* otherwise. It prompts creating notions for making justice to our hybrid realities, experiences, and elastic selves' creative power in-between. Taken-for-granted categories trap us to understand third spaces.

Further implications for pedagogical and research work appear. Peace linguistics excels peace as reified contents. Pedagogical and research options could harness locally embodied peace construction by teachers through their amplified experiences in-between. Subsequently, intuitiveness complementing rationality becomes another resource for teaching and researching. Educational contexts could approach third spaces in peace construction towards living/learning together, which encompasses *love* in-between. Disruptive, decolonial, but especially, pedagogical love (Jiménez-Becerra, 2021) seemed consubstantial to experiences, and voices. More inquiry could address this multifaceted love linguistically and socially. Sensing-thinking it, considering third spaces' fluidity, is relevant towards pedagogies and inquiries that denaturalize modern/colonial academies' disembodiment. Revisiting normalized violence(s) constitutes a first decision.

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Tipo: Artículo original - **Sección:** Temática variada

Hacia una Ley de Lenguas Indígenas en Paraguay

Towards an Indigenous Languages Law in Paraguay

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RESUMEN

El 29 de diciembre de 2010, el presidente Fernando Lugo promulgó la Ley 4.251, De Lenguas, donde se establecen las modalidades de utilización de las lenguas oficiales de la República y se disponen las medidas adecuadas para promover y garantizar el uso de las lenguas indígenas del Paraguay. Los pueblos indígenas que habitan el territorio nacional tienen derecho a recibir apoyo del Estado para garantizar la supervivencia y funcionalidad de sus lenguas y culturas, como medio para fortalecer su identidad étnica. La poca disponibilidad financiera de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas, creada por dicha ley, le hace muy difícil cumplir con las exigencias relacionadas con los Pueblos Indígenas. En 2016, la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas aprobó una resolución en la que se proclamó el año 2019 Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, sobre la base de una recomendación hecha por el Foro Permanente para las Cuestiones Indígenas. Siguiendo las recomendaciones de las Naciones Unidas, el Paraguay promulgó la Ley 6352/2019 “Que Crea la Comisión Nacional de Conmemoración del Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas”. Uno de los resultados de la celebración del Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, a nivel internacional, fue la proclamación del Decenio Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas (2022-2031) el 18 de diciembre de 2019. A esta iniciativa el Estado paraguayo respondió con la Ley N° 7008/2022 que crea la “Comisión Nacional para el Fortalecimiento, la Promoción y la Valorización de las Lenguas Indígenas en el Paraguay”. En el marco del Año Internacional, la Comisión de Conmemoración logra el reconocimiento legal de las lenguas indígenas existentes en el Paraguay vía Decreto presidencial N° 5377/2021. El artículo trata de abordar la comprensión de la problemática relacionada con un anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas donde los representantes de los Pueblos Indígenas, autodeterminados, el Grupo de Fortaleza de las Lenguas Indígenas, juntamente con la Coordinación Nacional de Pastoral Indígena (CONAPI), están trabajando desde hace tres años sobre dicho anteproyecto. Se partirá de las leyes relacionados con el enfoque de las lenguas indígenas, después profundizaremos el proceso de la elaboración de un borrador del anteproyecto de dicha ley. Finalmente indicaremos los alcances de dicho proyecto.

Palabras clave: Ley de Lenguas; Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas; Decenio Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas; anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas.

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ABSTRACT

On December 29, 2010, President Fernando Lugo promulgated Law 4,251, On Languages, which establishes the modalities for the use of the official languages of the Republic and provides appropriate measures to promote and guarantee the use of the indigenous languages in Paraguay. The indigenous peoples who inhabit the national territory have the right to receive support from the State to guarantee the survival and functionality of their languages and cultures, to strengthen their ethnic identity. The limited financial availability of the Linguistic Policies Secretariat, created by said law, makes it very difficult for it to comply with the demands related to Indigenous Peoples. In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages, based on a recommendation made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Following the recommendations of the United Nations, Paraguay enacted Law 6352/2019 Creating the National Commission to Commemorate the International Year of Indigenous Languages. One of the results of the celebration of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, at the international level, was the proclamation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2023) on December 18, 2019. The Paraguayan State responded to this initiative with the Law 7008/2022 that creates the National Commission for the Strengthening, Promotion and Valorization of Indigenous Languages in Paraguay. Within the framework of the International Year, the Commemoration Commission achieves legal recognition of the existing indigenous languages in Paraguay by Presidential Decree No. 5377/2021. The article tries to address the understanding of the problem related to a draft of the Law on Indigenous Languages where the representatives of the self-determined Indigenous Peoples, the Strength Group of Indigenous Languages, together with the National Coordination of Indigenous Pastoral Care (CONAPI), have been working on this preliminary project for three years. We will start from the laws related to the approach to indigenous languages, then we will deepen the process of preparing a draft of the preliminary draft of said law. Finally, we will indicate the scope of said project.

Keywords: Language Law; International Year of Indigenous Languages; International Decade of Indigenous Languages; draft of the Indigenous Languages Law.

Introducción

Según el último Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda para Pueblos Indígenas de 2022, la población indígena en el Paraguay es de 140.039 personas que conforman cinco familias lingüísticas. La familia Guaraní, compuesta por los Aché, Avá Guaraní, Guaraní Ñandéva, Mbyá Guaraní, Guaraní Occidental y Pañ Tavyterã, representa el 55,6 % de la población indígena. Le sigue la familia Lengua Maskoy, que incluye los Enlhet (lenguas del Norte), Enxet (Lenguas del Sur), Angaite, Sanapaná, Guana y Toba, con (23,1 %). La familia lingüística de Mataco Mataguayo, compuesta por los Nivaclé, Maká y Manjui, con (15,2 %). Las de menores poblaciones son de las familias lingüísticas Zamuco, que incluye Ayoreo, Ishir y Tomárahos, con (3,6 %) y de la familia Guaicurú, del Pueblo Qom, que es (1,6 %) de la población indígena a nivel nacional (INE, 2023).

Los Pueblos Indígenas en el Paraguay cuentan, al parecer, con una situación favorable en el aspecto legal donde las leyes nacionales hacen bastante referencia a la situación lingüística de los nativos. Sin embargo, existen numerosos obstáculos económicos y culturales para poder seguir avanzando en el fortalecimiento de las lenguas indígenas. Los acontecimientos de proclamación por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas del año 2019 como Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas y la proclamación del Decenio Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas (2022-2023) del 18 de diciembre de 2019, han movilizado a los países incluyendo al Paraguay, para fortalecer, promocionar y valorizar las Lenguas Indígenas en el Paraguay.

Situación legal de las Lenguas Indígenas en el Paraguay

La situación legal de las lenguas indígenas en nuestro país es poco favorable. Por más que la Constitución Nacional en su Artículo 140 menciona las lenguas nativas, las reduce al patrimonio cultural: “El Paraguay es un país pluricultural y bilingüe. Son idiomas oficiales el

castellano y el guaraní. La ley establecerá las modalidades de utilización de uno y otro. Las lenguas indígenas, así como las de otras minorías, forman parte del patrimonio cultural de la Nación”. Y el Artículo 77 que habla de la enseñanza en lengua materna dice que: “La enseñanza en los comienzos del proceso escolar se realizará en la lengua oficial materna del educando... En el caso de las minorías étnicas cuya lengua materna no sea el guaraní, se podrá elegir uno de los dos idiomas oficiales”, es decir, no da ninguna posibilidad legal a las lenguas de otras familias lingüísticas fuera del Guaraní.

Tampoco la Ley de Lenguas, promulgada en el año 2010, abre mucho espacio para el desarrollo pleno de las lenguas indígenas en el Paraguay. La Ley 4251/2010 “De Lenguas” en su art. 1º. habla de las modalidades del uso de las lenguas indígenas. “La presente ley tiene por objeto establecer las modalidades de utilización de las lenguas oficiales de la República; disponer las medidas adecuadas para promover y garantizar el uso de las lenguas indígenas del Paraguay”. El idioma guaraní muchas, muchas veces confundido con la lengua indígena, tendrá vigencia y uso en los tres Poderes del Estado y en todas las instituciones públicas. El idioma guaraní deberá ser objeto de especial atención por parte del Estado, como signo de la identidad cultural de la nación, instrumento de cohesión nacional y medio de comunicación de la mayoría de la población paraguaya (Art. 3º).

La Ley de Lenguas en sus artículos 5º y 12º aseguran la promoción de las lenguas indígenas: “El Estado promoverá la preservación y el uso de las lenguas originarias de América, tanto en el país como en las organizaciones internacionales en las que participe (Art. 5). “Los pueblos indígenas que habitan el territorio nacional tienen derecho a recibir apoyo del Estado para garantizar la supervivencia y funcionalidad de sus lenguas y culturas, como medio para fortalecer su identidad étnica” (Art. 12), sin embargo, en la práctica, el Estado paraguayo no destina suficiente recursos financieros y talentos humanos para invertir en la investigación, sistematización y promoción de las lenguas indígenas en el territorio nacional, y menos en nivel internacional.

Ciertamente la Ley de Lenguas crea la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas (Art. 31-32) para la aplicación de la presente ley con la participación de organismos públicos y privados vinculados al tema. La Secretaría es responsable de planificar el uso de las lenguas, en especial las oficiales, en los ámbitos comunicacional, educativo, judicial, comercial, administrativo, político, profesional y en toda instancia de interacción social (Art. 34º). Sin embargo, su presupuesto nacional es muy reducido y no permite cumplir con su rol como ente rector de todas las lenguas en nuestro territorio.

Cabe mencionar también la Ley N° 5621/16 de Protección del Patrimonio Cultural que define Patrimonio Cultural mencionando las lenguas y memorias colectivas: “El patrimonio cultural del Paraguay se encuentra constituido por los bienes muebles e inmuebles, materiales e inmateriales, ambientales y construidos, seculares o eclesiásticos, públicos o privados, en cuanto resulten relevantes para la cultura, en razón de valores derivados de los mismos, en cualquiera de sus ámbitos como: el arte, la estética, la arqueología, la paleontología, la arquitectura, la economía, la tecnología, la bibliografía, el urbanismo, el ambiente, la etnografía, la ciencia, la historia, la educación, la tradición, las lenguas, y la memoria colectiva” (Art. 3º).

El artículo Art. 5º de dicha ley hace la Clasificación de los Bienes Culturales que integran el Patrimonio. Se establece la siguiente clasificación de bienes culturales: “inciso b) Las expresiones, tradiciones y saberes provenientes de sectores que mantienen y elaboran las memorias colectivas o introducen innovaciones a partir de procesos culturales propios. Tales sectores están constituidos por pueblos indígenas y comunidades de inmigrantes y de

afrodescendientes, así como por colectividades populares diversas. Estas manifestaciones conforman el patrimonio vivo del país: rituales, festividades, manifestaciones artísticas y lenguas en cuanto al objeto de esta ley”.

Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas

La iniciativa de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas que aprobó una resolución en la que se proclamó el año 2019 Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, sobre la base de una recomendación hecha por el Foro Permanente para las Cuestiones Indígenas, animó al Estado paraguayo de elaborar y promulgar la Ley 6352/2019 “Que crea la Comisión Nacional de Conmemoración del Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas”.

La Ley de la Nación N° 6352 del 2 de agosto de 2019, incluyó la participación de autoridades y representantes de distintos organismos y entidades del Estado, de los poderes Ejecutivo, Legislativo y Judicial, entidades binacionales; representantes de los pueblos indígenas y de la sociedad civil comprometidas con los pueblos indígenas y la Academia de la Lengua Guaraní. Según Artículo 2° la “Comisión Nacional de Conmemoración del año internacional de las lenguas indígenas”, estaba coordinada por el Secretario Ejecutivo de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas (SPL) e integrada por:

- a) Un representante de pueblos indígenas.
- b) Un representante de las organizaciones civiles comprometidas con los pueblos indígenas.
- c) El Secretario Ejecutivo de la Secretaria Nacional de Cultura (SNC).
- d) El Secretario Ejecutivo de la Secretaría Nacional de Turismo (SENATUR).
- e) El Presidente del Instituto Nacional del Indígena (INDI).
- f) Un representante del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias (MEC).
- g) Un representante del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (MRE).
- h) Un representante del Ministerio del Interior (MI).
- i) Un representante de la Secretaría Nacional de Deportes (SND).
- j) Un representante del Ministerio de Justicia (MJ).
- k) Un representante del Ministerio de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (MITIC).
- l) Un representante del Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social (MSPyBS).
- m) Un representante del Ministerio de la Mujer (MM).
- n) Un representante del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social.
- o) Un representante del Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior (CONES).
- p) Un representante del Gabinete Social de la Presidencia de la República.
- q) Un representante del Instituto Paraguayo de Artesanía.
- r) Un representante de la Entidad Binacional Itaipú.
- s) Un representante de la Entidad Binacional Yacyretá
- t) Un representante del Comisión de Cooperación UNESCO-MEC.

- u) Un representante del Centro Cultural de la República “El Cabildo”.
- v) Un representante de la Comisión de Pueblos Indígenas de la Honorable Cámara de Senadores.
- w) Un representante de la comisión de Pueblos Indígenas de la Honorable Cámara de Diputados.
- x) Un representante del Poder Judicial.
- y) Un representante de la Academia de la Lengua Guaraní (Art. 2).

Lastimosamente la participación de los mismos interesados, es decir, los Pueblos Indígenas fue reducida, según inciso a) Un representante de pueblos indígenas, que en la práctica dejaba muy poco espacio para los nativos. Por suerte el Artículo 3° menciona que “La Comisión Nacional coordinará sus acciones con el Consejo Nacional de Educación Indígena y otras instancias de participación de los pueblos indígenas. Gracias a este artículo pudieron entrar más representantes indígenas para los trabajos de la Comisión, cuyos objetivos fueron: Elaborar programas y proyectos para fortalecer la interculturalidad y la promoción de las lenguas indígenas, a ser implementados en los organismos de los tres Poderes del Estado, conforme a los fines de esta Comisión. Promover el conocimiento, uso, valoración de las lenguas indígenas como parte del patrimonio cultural de la nación. Proponer acciones para garantizar los derechos lingüísticos de los pueblos indígenas. Implementar el Plan de Normalización de la Lengua Guaraní, que permita el uso equitativo de las lenguas oficiales, de conformidad con las disposiciones de la Ley 4251/10, De Lenguas” (Art. 4).

Como siempre, “los recursos requeridos para la ejecución de los programas previstos por la Comisión Nacional serán contemplados e incorporados en el presupuesto de cada institución involucrada” (Art. 5°). Teniendo en cuenta que la ley fue promulgada el 2 de agosto, las instituciones que integraban dicha Comisión no tuvieron posibilidades de incluir en sus presupuestos anuales fondos extra para las actividades de la Comisión Nacional. Sin embargo, la Comisión pudo reunirse regularmente y avanzar en algunas actividades y preparar algunas propuestas legales.

Uno de los resultados de la celebración del Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas y del trabajo de la Comisión fue la elaboración del documento de reconocimiento legal de las lenguas indígenas en Paraguay, que nunca fueron reconocidas en forma particular, es decir, especificando el nombre de cada lengua indígena. El Decreto Presidencial N° 5377/2021, por el cual se reconocen las distintas lenguas indígenas y familias lingüísticas existentes en el Paraguay dice en su Art. 1° “Reconócese las distintas lenguas propias utilizadas por los pueblos y comunidades indígenas en el Paraguay y la asociación de las mismas en familias lingüísticas, y declárase a las mismas como parte del patrimonio cultural de la nación de conformidad con lo dispuesto en el segundo párrafo del artículo 140 de la Constitución de la República del Paraguay”.

El Art. 2° especifica las familias lingüísticas con sus lenguas de cada pueblo: “Son lenguas indígenas de la República del Paraguay los siguientes: Familia Lingüística Guaraní: Aché, Avá Guaraní, Guaraní Ñandéva, Mbyá Guaraní, Guaraní Occidental, Paĩ Tavyterã. Familia Lingüística Mataco - Mataguayo: Nivaclé, Maká, Manjui. Familia Lingüística Maskoy: Enlhet (lenguas del Norte), Enxet (Lenguas del Sur), Angaite, Sanapaná, Guana, Toba. Familia Lingüística Zamuco: Ayoreo, Ishir, Tomaráhos. Familia Lingüística Guaicurú: Qom”. Acorde del Decreto 5377/202, la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas, dependiente de la Presidencia de la República, coordinará las acciones conducentes a la promoción, protección y valorización de las Lenguas Indígenas del Paraguay (Art. 3°).

Otro resultado de las actividades realizadas por Comisión fue la elaboración de un anteproyecto de la Ley que contempla la creación de una comisión permanente, teniendo en cuenta la proclamación del Decenio Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas (2022-2023) el 18 de diciembre del 2019. A esta iniciativa de la Comisión, el Estado paraguayo responde el 27 de octubre de 2022 con la Ley N° 7008/2022 “Que crea la “Comisión Nacional Para el Fortalecimiento, la Promoción y la Valorización de las Lenguas Indígenas en el Paraguay”. La “Comisión Nacional para el Fortalecimiento, la Promoción, y la Valorización de las Lenguas Indígenas en el Paraguay”, que dependerá estructuralmente de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas y será integrada por más de una veintena de representantes de distintos organismos y entidades del Estado, de los poderes Ejecutivo, Legislativo y Judicial, entidades binacionales; representantes de los pueblos indígenas y de la sociedad civil comprometidas con los pueblos indígenas, casi igual que en caso de la Comisión Nacional de la Ley 6352/2019, excepto inciso d) que habla de un representante de cada uno de los pueblos indígenas, es decir, en total 19 representantes de los Pueblos Indígenas.

La nueva Comisión Nacional será dirigida por la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas (SPL), quien actuará como presidente, contará con una Coordinación General y una Dirección Ejecutiva (Art. 2) y podrá coordinar sus acciones con el Consejo Nacional de Educación Indígena y otras instancias de participación de los pueblos indígenas (Art. 3). Los objetivos de la Comisión Nacional son: “Establecer y desarrollar un Plan Nacional para el fortalecimiento, promoción y valoración de las Lenguas indígenas. Proponer acciones para garantizar los derechos lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas. Promover el conocimiento, uso, valoración de las lenguas indígenas como parte del patrimonio cultural de la nación. Elaborar programas y proyectos para fortalecer la interculturalidad y la promoción de las lenguas indígenas, a ser implementados en los organismos de los tres Poderes del Estado” (Art. 4).

Lo novedoso de la Comisión Nacional es que tendrá un carácter permanente y establecerá la periodicidad en la realización de las sesiones, el asiento de la comisión, la metodología de trabajo y las facultades y obligaciones inherentes a los integrantes de la misma, conforme a su Reglamento Interno, que será elaborado y aprobado en una sesión ordinaria de la misma (Art. 5) y los recursos requeridos para la ejecución de los programas previstos por la Comisión Nacional, serán contemplados en el Presupuesto General de Gastos de la Nación y dentro del presupuesto institucional de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas, dependiente de la Presidencia de la República (Art.7). Cabe mencionar que hasta la fecha no pudo conformarse dicha Comisión Nacional.

Formación y capacitación del grupo de fortaleza de las Lenguas Indígenas

Hace muchos años los representantes de los Pueblos Indígenas, sobre todo de la Asociación de Educadores Indígenas del Paraguay (ADEIPY) estaban reclamando una ley relacionada con las lenguas indígenas como la ley de Educación Escolar Indígena 3332/07, que crea la Dirección Escolar de Educación Indígena (DGEEI) argumentando que la Ley de Lenguas promocionando principalmente la lengua guaraní dando poco espacio a las demás lenguas indígenas existentes en el Paraguay. Al principio del 2021 se creó un grupo de seguidores de la idea de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas autodenominado Grupo de Fortaleza de las Lenguas Indígenas. El Grupo, integrado por los representantes de los Pueblo Indígenas y algunos profesionales indigenistas, emprende la formación relacionada con la legislación vigente en la materia de las lenguas indígenas y sigue una serie de encuentros donde trabaja sobre un borrador del anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas. Consensuando el borrador base el Grupo decide convocar una jornada de Socialización del anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas.

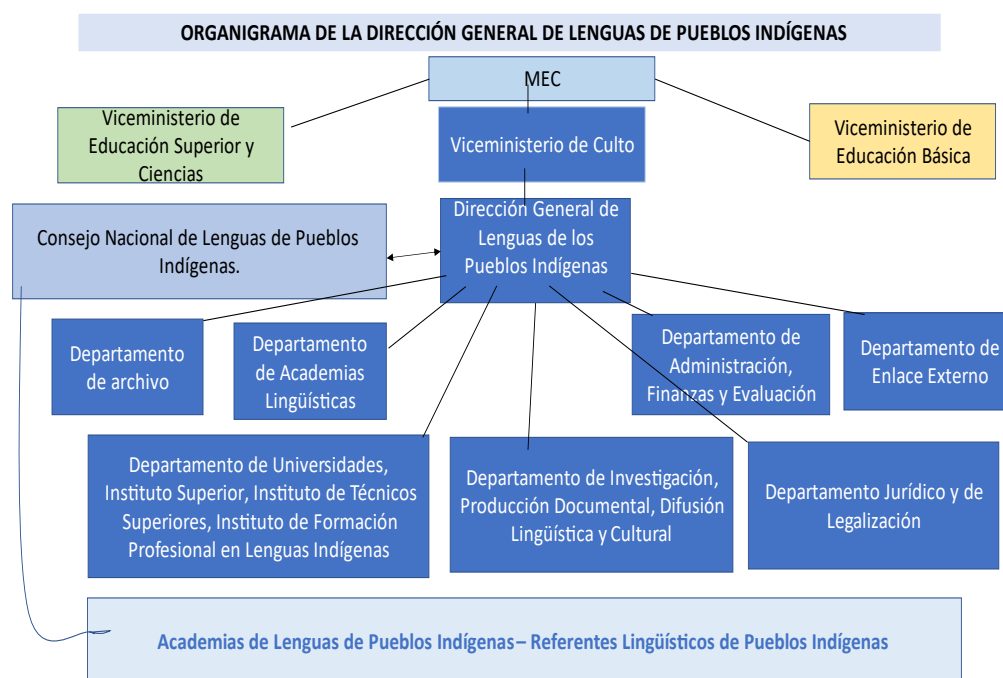
La jornada de socialización del Anteproyecto de Ley de Lenguas Indígenas

En San Lorenzo, el 18 y 19 de mayo de 2023, se reunieron los docentes, supervisores, directores de Área, miembros del Consejo Nacional, miembros del Consejo Nacional de Educación y Ciencia (CONEC), autoridades nacionales, representantes de los pueblos indígenas, organizaciones representantes de instituciones como la Dirección General de Educación de Escolar Indígena (DGEEI), representantes de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas, representantes del Viceministerio de Educación Superior, miembros del Asociación de Educadores Indígenas del Paraguay (ADEIPY), Grupo de Fortalezas de Lenguas Indígenas. El Paraguay es un país constituido por 19 pueblos étnicamente diferenciados, con historias, culturas y lenguas propias. Por ello, es importante estudiar y analizar el anteproyecto de Ley de Lenguas Indígenas. Se inició el acto compartiendo la ceremonia espiritual con el Pueblo Pañ Tavyterã. Después los representantes del Equipo Interinstitucional dieron unas palabras de bienvenida en representación de su organización e institución: de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas: Sra. Carmen Rossana Bogado; de CONAPI: Dr. Enrique Gaska; de Grupo Impulsor del Proyecto: Eugen Amadeus Benz; de la Dirección General de la Educación Escolar Indígena: Myrian Rebeca Núñez Cruzabie. Al terminar el acto protocolar se presentó el borrador del anteproyecto (DIM, 2023).

El Segundo momento de la jornada fue la presentación de los alcances del Anteproyecto y el organigrama de la nueva Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas dentro de la Estructura del MEC. El Dr. Enrique Gaska presentó los alcances que garantiza el Anteproyecto de Ley de Lenguas Indígenas: 1. El fortalecimiento, la promoción, protección, reavivamiento, revitalización y recuperación de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas. 2. Creación de una Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas dentro de la estructura del Viceministerio de Educación Superior y Ciencias. 3. El reconocimiento oficial de todas las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas que habitan en el territorio paraguayo. 4. Garantiza la no discriminación en el uso de su propia lengua. 5. Garantiza la creación de una base de datos para la protección y promoción de las lenguas indígenas. 6. Garantiza la promoción de los encuentros lingüísticos entre los pueblos con su cosmovisión, autodeterminación, autonomía, normas consuetudinarias, tierras y territorios propios. 7. Promueve el uso oral de las lenguas indígenas existentes. 8. Asegura la creación de los territorios lingüísticos de cada pueblo en lugares que habitan. 9. Asegura el trabajo en coordinación con instituciones afines a las lenguas y educación indígena. 10. Garantiza el uso escrito de las lenguas indígenas. 11. Garantiza la formación de indígenas profesionales en su lengua. 12. Garantiza el uso de nombres indígenas, sean individuales o geográficos. 13. Garantiza que todos los juicios sean en las propias lenguas y considera la necesidad de los intérpretes nativos. 14. Garantiza a la protección de las lenguas en peligro de extinción. 15. Garantiza el fortalecimiento de las lenguas de los Pueblos Indígenas, cuyos territorios se extienden a los países vecinos, mediante la cooperación entre los Estados (DIM, 2023).

Representante del Pueblo Aché, Andrés Torales explicó, a través del organigrama, la ubicación de la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas dentro de la Estructura del MEC.

Imagen 1. MEC y su organización



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

El estudio del documento en los grupos arrojó algunas sugerencias para el futuro proyecto de Ley de Lenguas indígenas, entre las cosas más resaltante están: Que se considere para la terna personas que tengan participación en el seguimiento del Proyecto de Ley de Lenguas Indígenas; Que se incluya la Educación Inclusiva en todos los niveles donde se mencionan los niveles también, permanente, lengua en seña y braille; Que se apruebe como una ley y no por resolución; Que se hable más de la cosmovisión y la espiritualidad desde la realidad de cada pueblo; Que se dé la participación a los indígenas para ocupar los cargos directivos y que se esté unidos como Pueblos Indígenas del Paraguay; Que desde el RUE todo se escribe y menciona en castellano y ya no se permite hacerlo en guaraní o en la lengua de cada pueblo; Que las instituciones públicas en general tengan la libertad lingüística para usar la lengua indígena siempre y cuando tenga una necesidad en cada institución, por eso la necesidad de un traductor indígena en cuestiones de escritos, documentos. Los grupos sugieren que los indígenas deben tener la oportunidad de estudiar Lingüística en otros países, en una especie de intercambio con otras universidades y que sea creado el Dpto. de Proyecto, Investigación, Producción Documental y Archivo dentro de la estructura de la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas (DIM, 2023).

Conclusiones finales

Según la Carta Magna, Paraguay es un país bilingüe con el castellano y guaraní como lenguas oficiales. Las lenguas pertenecientes a los Pueblos Indígenas que habitan el territorio nacional son consideradas como parte del patrimonio cultural de la Nación. El Estado paraguayo, a través de la Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas, procura de disponer las medidas adecuadas para promover y garantizar el uso de las lenguas indígenas del Paraguay. Los estudios demuestran algunas lenguas indígenas en situación de peligro de desaparecer, como: Guana, Angaité, Avá Guaraní, Sanapaná, y Tomárahó (DGEEC, 2015).

Por más que las lenguas indígenas constituyen una riqueza cultural y lingüística, también, a primera vista, cuentan con aspecto legal favorable, los resultados de este estudio demuestran que los nativos consideran que hace falta una ley aparte para las lenguas indígenas para el fortalecimiento, la promoción, protección, reavivamiento, revitalización y recuperación de sus lenguas conforme a sus tradiciones lingüísticas propias. También piden crear espacios propicios para abarcar diferentes aspectos, que no están contempladas en la Ley de Lenguas, como: garantizar la no discriminación en el uso de su propia lengua; asegurar la creación de los territorios lingüísticos de cada pueblo que habitan; garantizar el uso de nombres indígenas, sean individuales o geográficos; garantizar la protección de las lenguas en peligro de extinción; garantizar la creación de una base de datos para la protección y promoción de las lenguas indígenas; garantizar que todos los juicios sean en las propias lenguas considerando la necesidad de los intérpretes culturales y la formación de indígenas profesionales en su lengua. Para poder cumplir con las exigencias, se propone la creación de una Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas dentro de la estructura del Viceministerio de Educación Superior y Ciencias.

La celebración del Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, proclamado por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, y la divulgación del Decenio Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas, motivó a los Estados, así también a los Pueblos Indígenas, de proponer las leyes que puedan garantizar el fortalecimiento de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas existentes en países latinoamericanos, mediante la cooperación entre los Estados. La propuesta del Anteproyecto de la Ley de Lenguas Indígenas tiene que contar con una buena colaboración de los diferentes pueblos y buena socialización con las bases para que no haya malentendidos y para que los encuentros lingüísticos entre los pueblos indígenas sean respetando los principios de su cosmovisión, autodeterminación, autonomía y normas consuetudinarias.

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Anexo

Borrador del Anteproyecto de Ley de Lenguas Indígenas

Capítulo I

Disposiciones Generales

ARTÍCULO 1°. Créase la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas en la estructura orgánica del Viceministerio de Educación Superior y Ciencias como órgano de aplicación de esta ley. Estará a cargo de un/a director/a general, idónea en la cultura y lenguas indígenas, que será nombrado/a por el Poder Ejecutivo de una terna propuesta por el Consejo Nacional de Lenguas de Pueblos Indígenas.

ARTÍCULO 2°. Objeto. De las fortalezas de las Lenguas de los pueblos indígenas y su reconocimiento. La presente Ley tiene como objeto la promoción, protección, reavivamiento, revitalización y recuperación de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas que habitan el territorio nacional, conforme a sus tradiciones lingüísticas propias, desarrolladas naturalmente en sus tierras y territorios, en todos los niveles académicos: Inicial, Educación Escolar Básica, Nivel Medio, Permanente y Superior, en el marco del reconocimiento de sus derechos constitucionales y legales, mediante la adopción, financiación, realización de planes, programas y proyectos específicos, de investigaciones y documentaciones, desarrollados por los órganos competentes del Estado.

ARTÍCULO 3°. Reconocimiento. Las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas son reconocidas como lenguas propias, en el marco del Estado pluricultural y multilingüe, conforme a la idea de la igualdad de todas las personas en dignidad y derechos, considerando que las lenguas son representaciones culturales de los pueblos indígenas y sus miembros individuales y colectivos.

ARTÍCULO 4°. No discriminación. Ningún hablante de una lengua de los pueblos indígenas podrá ser sometido a discriminación de ninguna índole, a causa del uso, transmisión o enseñanza de su lengua.

ARTÍCULO 5°. Conforme a la presente ley se organizará un sistema de protección y promoción de la documentación lingüística existente en todos los niveles académicos: Inicial, Educación Escolar Básica, Nivel Medio, Permanente y Superior. Para el efecto, se trabajará con los diferentes pueblos indígenas, conforme a sus propios grupos lingüísticos. Asimismo, se elaborarán planes, programas y proyectos, tendientes a su promoción, mantenimiento recuperación y enriquecimiento de las lenguas indígenas.

ARTÍCULO 6°. Se promoverán encuentros sociales y culturales intra y entre pueblos indígenas a nivel local, regional, nacional e internacional. Estos encuentros sistemáticos se realizarán respetando los principios de: cosmovisión, autodeterminación, autonomía, normas consuetudinarias, tierras y territorios propios, así como el derecho a la participación y la educación formal, en las formas reconocidas por la Constitución Nacional, los Convenios Internacionales ratificados, como el Convenio 169 de la OIT y las leyes nacionales.

ARTÍCULO 7°. Las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas se caracterizan por su oralidad, la transmisión de sus elementos lingüísticos de generación en generación, así como la fortaleza y protección de su esencia cultural, social y espiritual por parte de las comunidades, los líderes religiosos, sus guardianes culturales y sus sistemas políticos y organizativos. Se promoverá el uso oral de las lenguas existentes, conforme a diferentes planes, programas y proyectos, en todos los niveles académicos: Inicial, Educación Escolar Básica, Nivel Medio, Permanente y Superior teniendo como base la cosmovisión de cada pueblo y sus pautas culturales.

ARTÍCULO 8°. Territorialidad. Las lenguas indígenas se desarrollan en territorios lingüísticos definidos, conforme a los territorios ocupados por los pueblos indígenas. En estos lugares, la lengua de cada pueblo será considerada prioritaria, conforme a las disposiciones de esta ley. La población no indígena deberá respetarla, conocerla y promover su uso en todos los niveles, en general. Estos territorios lingüísticos serán definidos mediante la aplicación de la Ley 234/93 que obliga al Estado a determinar los territorios tradicionales de cada Pueblo Indígena.

ARTÍCULO 9°. La Dirección General de las Lenguas Indígenas trabajará en coordinación, con la Dirección General de Educación Escolar Indígena (DGEI), Secretaría de Políticas Lingüísticas (SPL), las demás dependencias y organismos del Estado en el diseño de currículos y programas de las distintas lenguas de los pueblos indígenas en concordancia con la ley 3231/07, con el fin de sistematizar sus conocimientos, enseñanza y fortalecimiento, siempre desde la visión de la oralidad y su proyección hacia la normalización de su escritura.

ARTÍCULO 10°. La normalización de las lenguas que ya cuentan con un sistema escrito será objeto de implementación sistemática en sus respectivos territorios lingüísticos. Y los que aún no cuentan con la escritura iniciarán un proceso de elaboración. Para el efecto, se utilizarán los currículos propios, elaborados con base al conocimiento de los pueblos indígenas y coordinar la inclusión de información en el currículum nacional sobre la existencia de los Pueblos Indígenas con sus lenguas y cosmovisiones, en concordancia del art. 62 de la Constitución Nacional.

ARTÍCULO 11°. La Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas, conjuntamente con el Viceministerio de Educación Superior, en concordancia con el Consejo Nacional de Lenguas de Pueblos Indígenas, con las academias lingüísticas y/o equipos lingüísticos de los pueblos indígenas y los representantes indígenas de la Comisión Nacional para el Fortalecimiento de las lenguas indígenas, promoverá la formación de profesionales en lenguas indígenas mediante la apertura de Instituciones de Educación Superior, cuya finalidad estará enfocada a la promoción, protección, reavivamiento, revitalización y recuperación de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas que habitan el territorio nacional.

ARTÍCULO 12°. Nombres propios y toponimia en las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas. Los nombres y apellidos de personas provenientes de la lengua y de la tradición cultural usados por los pueblos indígenas, así como los nombres de lugares geográficos utilizados tradicionalmente

en su territorio por sus integrantes podrán ser reconocidos con fines de uso público y de preservación cultural.

ARTÍCULO 13°. Derechos en las relaciones con la justicia y la administración pública. Los hablantes de lenguas de los pueblos indígenas que, por razones jurídicas de cualquier índole, tengan que comparecer ante los órganos del Estado, tendrán derecho a manifestar sus ideas en su propia lengua y las autoridades responsables proveerán lo necesario para que, en los juicios, peticiones u otras de igual carácter que se realicen, quienes lo solicitaren, sean asistidos gratuitamente por intérpretes y defensores que tengan conocimiento de su lengua y cultura. Para el efecto, las autoridades competentes acordarán con los distintos grupos étnicos donde habiten comunidades que hablen lenguas nativas, la adopción de medidas que permitan avanzar progresivamente en el cumplimiento y satisfacción de los derechos y compromisos definidos en el presente artículo.

ARTÍCULO 14°. Lenguas en peligro de extinción. La Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas de forma conjunta con el Viceministerio de Educación Superior y Ciencias, después de consultar y concertar con las comunidades correspondientes, coordinará el diseño y la realización de planes de urgencia para contar con toda la documentación posible sobre cada una de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas en peligro de extinción y para desarrollar acciones orientadas a conseguir en lo posible su revitalización. La propia Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas conjuntamente con el Consejo Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas establecerá protocolos de intervención en estos casos puntuales.

ARTÍCULO 15°. De la cooperación entre gobiernos de Estados vecinos. Los Pueblos Indígenas cuyos límites territoriales trascienden los límites del Estado paraguayo, tienen la necesidad de fortalecer relaciones sistémicas con comunidades de esos pueblos, existentes en países vecinos, esa situación obliga a encaminar políticas de cooperación y convenios de carácter internacional en defensa de las lenguas comunes. Para el efecto, la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas planteará propuestas concretas para la firma de Convenios Internacionales con esos países para este fin.

CAPÍTULO II

De la organización

ARTÍCULO 16°. Se creará el Consejo Nacional de Lenguas de Pueblos Indígenas que estará conformado por representantes de las Academias de Lenguas de Pueblos Indígenas o en su defecto por Referentes de las Lenguas de cada Pueblo Indígena. El mismo mantendrá una relación de coordinación con la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas, velando por el cumplimiento de la presente ley. Así mismo coordinará acciones conforme a sus tradiciones lingüísticas propias, con el Consejo Nacional de Educación Indígena y otras instancias, con el objeto del fortalecimiento y protección de las lenguas indígenas; y elaborará una terna para el nombramiento del director/a de la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas.

ARTÍCULO 17° La Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas tendrá las siguientes funciones:

- a) Formular una política de fortalecimiento, rescate, producción, edición, divulgación, implementación y protección de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas, teniendo en cuenta los objetivos definidos en esta ley y coordinar el desarrollo de ejecución de sus acciones;

- b) Elaborar el diseño y mecanismo de implementación de los planes, programas y proyectos de lenguas de los pueblos indígenas definidos en el marco de esta ley;
- c) Promover el uso oral y escrito de las lenguas existentes en todos los niveles académicos;
- d) Ser una instancia de consulta y asesoramiento a las entidades, de carácter local, regional, nacional e internacional, que ejecuten planes, programas y/o proyectos de lenguas de los pueblos indígenas definidos en el marco de esta ley;
- e) Articular con los pueblos indígenas el desarrollo de actividades a favor de las lenguas referidas en esta ley;
- f) Gestionar a nivel local, departamental, regional, nacional e internacional, recursos científicos, técnicos o financieros para promover planes, programas y proyectos a favor de las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas;
- g) Diagnosticar, monitorear y evaluar planes, programas y proyectos referentes a las lenguas de los pueblos indígenas;
- h) Trabajar conjuntamente con las Academias Lingüísticas, Equipos Lingüísticos, Organizaciones Civiles y Universidades para la realización de programas específicos, de investigaciones, documentaciones y formación de profesionales lingüistas;
- i) Crear las dependencias correspondientes para asegurar el cumplimiento de los fines de la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas.

ARTICULO 18°. Órganos de gestión. La Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas tendrá los siguientes departamentos: de Archivo, Investigación y de Producción Documental; de Academias Lingüísticas, Universidades e Institutos de formación profesional en lenguas indígenas; de Administración, Finanzas y Evaluación.

CAPÍTULO III

De los recursos

ARTÍCULO 19° Serán recursos destinados a la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas (DGLI):

- a) Los montos asignados por el Presupuesto General de la Nación, correspondientes al Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias - MEC;
- b) Las donaciones provenientes de organismos internacionales, organismos gubernamentales, organismos no gubernamentales o de otro organismo de cooperación bilateral;
- c) Los recursos presupuestarios de la Dirección General de Lenguas Indígenas no podrán ser utilizados para otros fines que no sean los señalados en la presente ley, y
- d) Otros recursos que pudieran destinarse en el marco de la naturaleza de sus fines.

Tipo: Artículo original - **Sección:** Temática variada

La diversidad desde una perspectiva psicolingüística

Diversity from a psycholinguistic
perspective

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RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda la cuestión del tratamiento de la diversidad en la educación desde una perspectiva psicolingüística. A partir de dos testimonios provenientes de personas que pertenecen a comunidades lingüísticas minoritarias (un niño sordo y una niña totonaca), se intenta reflexionar acerca de las concepciones de algunos docentes en cuanto a la diversidad y las barreras que dificultan la verdadera educación inclusiva.

Palabras clave: diversidad; lengua; educación; inclusión.

ABSTRACT

This article approaches the question of the treatment of diversity within education from a psycholinguistic perspective. From the reading of two testimonies from people who belong to minority linguistic communities (a deaf boy and a totonoca girl), we aim at reflecting upon the conceptions of some educators regarding diversity and the barriers which discourage a truly inclusive education.

Keywords: diversity; language; education; inclusion.

Conflictos de Interés: ninguno que declarar

Fuente de financiamiento: sin fuente de financiación.

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Introducción

La psicolingüística, surgida a mediados del siglo XX, se caracteriza por su indiscutida interdisciplinariedad. Abocada a la investigación en cuanto a la adquisición del lenguaje; y los procesos psicológicos, cognitivos y lingüísticos involucrados en ella, esta disciplina no puede sino emparentarse con la lingüística y la psicología en tanto disciplinas que de algún modo comparten su objeto de estudio.

La investigación en torno a la adquisición del lenguaje surgió dentro de la corriente conductista a través del aporte de Skinner, en consonancia con el desarrollo de la lingüística estructural en los Estados Unidos, cuyo principal exponente fue Leonard Bloomfield. La adquisición del lenguaje, desde esta perspectiva, no es sino la adquisición de nuevas conductas por acondicionamiento basado en la exposición, el refuerzo y la repetición. Este abordaje de carácter eminentemente empirista fue desafiado desde la lingüística por Noam Chomsky, quien se opone a la posibilidad del lenguaje como mero ejercicio de estímulos y respuestas, y enfatiza la creatividad regida por reglas del lenguaje como propiedad exclusiva de la especie humana. A partir de entonces, se complejiza el estudio de la adquisición del lenguaje y se centra la atención en los procesos cognitivos, innatos y biológicamente determinados, que nos diferencian claramente de otras especies. La teoría de una Gramática Universal abre nuevos y fructíferos caminos para la indagación en torno al lenguaje. Sin embargo, a partir de las contribuciones de Piaget (1977), y partiendo de una concepción del lenguaje como parte del desarrollo cognitivo del niño y de éste como sujeto cognoscente que interactúa con el medio, surgen nuevas perspectivas de investigación. Posteriormente se suma la dimensión sociocultural al desarrollo del lenguaje. Desde la escuela soviética, Vygotsky y posteriormente desde los Estados Unidos, Bruner, señalan que no puede ignorarse el rol que desempeña la interacción social para el desarrollo cognitivo del niño. Proponen que no puede pensarse al individuo en su individualidad ya que se trata de un sujeto inmerso en un contexto de socialización, que necesita del andamiaje de otros más expertos para lograr sus propósitos.

Las diferentes teorías surgidas a partir del estudio de la adquisición del lenguaje ponen de manifiesto la complejidad del objeto de estudio, pasible de ser abordado desde muy variadas perspectivas. La psicolingüística es entonces un campo interdisciplinar sumamente complejo que integra abordajes del objeto de estudio desde distintas formulaciones teóricas, valiéndose siempre de los aportes de otras ciencias que a su vez recogen sus contribuciones.

Psicolingüística e inclusión

Como se desprende del brevísimo recorrido teórico realizado en la introducción de este trabajo, podemos afirmar que la Psicolingüística puede brindarnos herramientas muy valiosas para analizar determinadas situaciones relacionadas con la adquisición de la lengua, la alfabetización, y, por ende, las prácticas educativas.

En este caso, a partir de dos testimonios reales, intentaré refutar acciones discriminatorias a partir de conceptos provenientes de esta disciplina, que ofrecen un sustento teórico para favorecer la inclusión.

Análisis de testimonios

Testimonio de un niño sordo de 15 años (Simón y Massone, 2002)

*“Las maestras decían que hablar con las manos era feo y muy importante con la boca.
Las autoridades no querían, algunas decían que la LSA era de monos”.*

El testimonio de este niño sordo evidencia la represión del lenguaje de señas y la recuperación de la oralidad como objetivo, cuestiones aún vigentes en muchas instituciones educativas, aferradas todavía al modelo clínico-terapéutico a pesar de su comprobado fracaso para el desarrollo académico de los niños sordos. Estas instituciones en donde la única lengua válida es la sonora parecen ignorar, como bien lo señala Skliar (1995), la nueva perspectiva socio-antropológica de la sordera y su implementación pedagógica a través de la educación bilingüe-bicultural.

En el caso de los sordos, suele existir el prejuicio de que los niños hipoacúsicos tienen dificultades cognitivas; sin embargo, la sordera se trata de una patología física: de la pérdida de la capacidad auditiva. Existen diversas investigaciones en las que se establecen relaciones entre la hipoacusia y el fracaso escolar, todas ellas provenientes de la visión deficitaria de la sordera. Pero a menudo los problemas de aprendizaje no se deben a la “discapacidad” sino que obedecen a la ausencia de prácticas educativas centradas en sus características de aprendizaje, a falencias en la enseñanza, que no se adecua a las necesidades pedagógicas de los niños sordos, cuyo aprendizaje difiere del de los niños oyentes. Desde diversas teorías podría explicarse este bajo rendimiento a partir de la falta de estímulos apropiados o la incapacidad de brindar andamiaje por parte de los docentes, quienes no están debidamente preparados para abordar la diversidad en sus aulas.

Como bien lo señala Raiter (1998), el lenguaje de señas desarrollado por los hipoacúsicos demuestra de algún modo el innatismo de la facultad del lenguaje, que se desarrolla en el caso de los sordos sin estímulos sonoros y, por lo tanto es independiente de los aparatos fonador y auditivo. Se ha comprobado que el proceso de adquisición del lenguaje por parte de los niños sordos, que incluye “un balbuceo manual”, es bastante similar al observado en la adquisición del lenguaje oral en el caso de los niños oyentes. No debemos olvidar que el lenguaje de señas es una lengua natural que se diferencia fundamentalmente de la lengua oral pues ésta no se actualiza a través del canal vocal/auditivo sino del canal viso-espacial. Pero se trata de una lengua natural con una clara organización fonológica (querológica, término de la teoría fonológica usado para describir las unidades combinatorias elementales o queremas que constituyen las palabras y signos de las lenguas de señas), morfológica y sintáctica que la tornan tan productiva como cualquier lengua oral. Y que presenta además variedades regionales, como lo hacen las lenguas orales.

En cuanto a la legislación, se ignora aquí la Ley N° 26.378, promulgada en 2018 en nuestro país, según la cual “por lenguaje se entenderá tanto el lenguaje oral como la lengua de señas y otras formas de comunicación no verbal”.

Este testimonio revela a las claras un ejemplo de discriminación en el aula, una penosa situación en la que los docentes desvalorizan, y hasta ridiculizan, el lenguaje de un estudiante sordo comparándolo con el de los monos. Poco parecen saber del lenguaje quienes comparan la lengua de señas con el sistema de comunicación animal, de naturaleza tan distinta al humano. No reconocer el lenguaje de señas como un verdadero lenguaje es en cierto modo negar una de las facultades que nos torna humanos y nos diferencia de las otras especies de seres vivos.

Estos docentes evidentemente no favorecen la inclusión en sus aulas; por el contrario, desde su lugar de poder, alientan la exclusión. Este tipo de actitudes por parte de maestros y autoridades refleja la imposibilidad de aceptar lo “diferente”, ya que se aspira al ya perimido objetivo de la “homogeneidad”.

El rechazo de la lengua de señas es de algún mundo también el rechazo de la cultura sorda (Ladd, 2005) y, en consecuencia, un modo de evitar el diálogo intercultural, tan provechoso y enriquecedor que se ha convertido en uno de los principales pilares de la educación en la actualidad.

Testimonio de una niña totonaca (Juárez Bravo, 2006)

“Al ingresar a la escuela, sin conocer otra lengua que la indígena, nuestra primera experiencia desagradable fue que el maestro nos habló en español. Todos estábamos atentos escuchando lo que decía, sin embargo no entendíamos. Al siguiente día ya no quería ir a la escuela por temor a no entender lo que dijera el maestro, pero mi mamá me llevó a fuerza por órdenes de mi padre. Ella platicó con el maestro sobre el problema que tenía y, afortunadamente, a partir de ese día el maestro nos habló en nuestra lengua materna: el totonaco. Aún recuerdo que nos contaba cuentos y chistes para lograr nuestra confianza y atención, sin embargo la enseñanza seguía siendo en español. En consecuencia, al término del ciclo escolar aprendí a leer sin comprender y de la misma manera concluí la primaria.”

Este testimonio también constituye un ejemplo de discriminación, de desvalorización de una lengua otra, en este caso aborígen, aun batallando contra la lengua dominante tras siglos de subordinación de los pueblos originarios. Esta actitud de parte del docente parece remontarnos al viejo prejuicio de “lenguas primitivas”, asociado a las lenguas ágrafas, que privilegia la lengua escrita por sobre la oral desconociendo las muchas razones que priorizan la lengua oral por sobre la escrita desde el punto de vista lingüístico. Esta mirada sobre una lengua aborígen sin duda poco se apoya en cuestiones científicas; se trata de más bien de cuestiones de poder, de prestigio, de la necesidad de “colonizar”. La situación planteada parece sustentarse en la noción del monolingüismo como situación ideal, en la que se estigmatiza al sujeto bilingüe (pues de eso se trata aunque no estén involucradas aquí lenguas prestigiosas como el inglés, el alemán o el francés), en lugar de aprovechar su mayor conciencia metalingüística. Se promueve la alfabetización en una lengua extranjera, lo cual sin duda dificulta el aprendizaje en gran medida. Este docente no se vale del conocimiento previo de sus alumnos para construir nuevos saberes, no considera que “el factor más importante que influye en el aprendizaje, es lo que el alumno ya sabe” (Ausubel, 1983). El primer idioma no se aprovecha como medio de comunicación ni como soporte para el desarrollo de nuevos conocimientos.

El docente no logra “asumir el bilingüismo como un valor positivo” (Ferreiro, 2007) ni apoderarse de su rol como mediador entre culturas, como mediador entre dos cosmovisiones del mundo. Si bien hace uso de la lengua aborígen en situaciones informales, se niega a la alfabetización en lengua materna, ignorando así la riqueza de la diversidad lingüística y cultural en el aula. Además no reconoce el valor del patrimonio lingüístico para la humanidad ni respeta la Ley 26206 de Educación Nacional, promulgada en el año 2006, la cual en su artículo 52 se refiere a la necesidad de garantizar “el derecho constitucional de los pueblos indígenas (...) a recibir una educación que contribuya a preservar y fortalecer sus pautas culturales, su lengua,

su cosmovisión e identidad étnica”. Desconoce la reforma constitucional de 1994, que incluye en el inciso 17 del artículo 75 el reconocimiento a los pueblos originarios de sus derechos civiles y de la educación intercultural bilingüe. El docente no percibe con claridad que la lengua y la cultura forman parte del mismo entramado; no logra identificar la lengua como parte de la cultura ni la identidad de una comunidad lingüística.

La familia del alumno, como muchos otros miembros de las comunidades minoritarias, ha perdido su autoestima lingüística y sabe, a partir de su propia experiencia seguramente, que su hija solamente podrá insertarse en el mercado laboral si aprende español, sólo así logrará en cierta medida evitar la exclusión social. Evidentemente la lengua continúa siendo un factor de inclusión o exclusión social, lo cual lleva a los propios hablantes de una lengua minoritaria a renunciar a sus lenguas porque sienten que les estorban y les imposibilitan acceder a la lengua prestigiosa, ligada a posiciones de poder. Esta situación trae aparejado un serio problema a nivel mundial que debería preocuparnos a todos: la desaparición de las lenguas aborígenes, y con ellas su valioso bagaje cultural. No debemos olvidar que las Naciones Unidas, que procuran supervisar las políticas regionales y nacionales relativas a la protección y planificación lingüísticas para la construcción de sociedades multilingües, han designado el 2019 como el "Año internacional de las lenguas indígenas" para concientizar sobre la importancia de las lenguas indígenas como portadoras de "sistemas complejos de conocimientos".

Consideraciones finales

Si bien se trata de testimonios de personas provenientes de distintas comunidades, la de sordos y la de totonacos, ambos parecen remitirnos a prejuicios enraizados en ideologías que favorecen la exclusión de lo distinto, fácilmente rebatibles desde la psicolingüística. El rechazo por la diversidad no es sino una muestra de la resistencia al cambio de la sociedad en su conjunto, reticente a la aceptación de cualquier factor que atente contra su uniformidad y su hegemonía.

El análisis de estos testimonios nos lleva a reflexionar acerca de cuestiones tales como la naturaleza del lenguaje, las propiedades de las lenguas, la relación entre lengua, pensamiento y cultura, entre muchas otras. Ambos testimonios giran en torno a la estigmatización de los usuarios de una lengua que no es la canónica y el rechazo de lo distinto. No se trasluce en ellos la resignificación del concepto de lengua surgido a partir de la globalización, que nos obligó a repensar muchas de nuestras concepciones acerca de lo deseable en materia lingüística.

En ambos casos se trata la problemática de la exclusión emanada del uso de una lengua minoritaria, de una lengua no canónica, de una lengua otra, de una lengua que nos enfrenta a la alteridad. Poco parece importar que nazcamos en el marco de una lengua/ cultura de la cual formamos parte, que constituye la esencia de nuestro propio ser y construye nuestra identidad. No se reconoce aquí el bilingüismo como ventaja ni se adopta una perspectiva integradora en las aulas sino que se opta por lo que Varela (2008) denominaría “la invisibilización de la lengua minoritaria”, y por ende la negación del “acceso a la ciudadanía”. Se les niega a los niños la posibilidad de pertenecer a dos culturas, a dos visiones de la realidad. No se acepta otra lengua por cuanto implica aceptar otra visión del mundo, otra categorización, otra evaluación, y tal vez otras respuestas a los problemas que nos aquejan como comunidad diversa, caracterizada por la pluralidad y la polifonía. Se insiste en un espacio en el que no se valora la diversidad sino que se considera la diferencia como deficiencia. Obviamente no se valora el bilingüismo por tratarse de lenguas que no se consideran prestigiosas; bien distinto sería el caso si se tratara de lenguas dominantes como el inglés o el francés, lenguas consideradas prestigiosas por cuestiones económicas y culturales.

Las instituciones a las que hacen referencia ambos testimonios, que marginalizan a estos estudiantes por su lengua minoritaria, no desempeñan su rol como espacio para la transformación social, en el que debiera pensarse “la alteridad, no como un obstáculo, sino como la presencia insoslayable de la diferencia” (Sinisi, 1999), que nos invita a cuestionar nuestras representaciones en cuanto a nosotros y los otros. Se trata de instituciones instaladas en concepciones del siglo pasado en las que los objetivos de la escolarización estaban ligados a la homogeneización, la mismidad y la negación de la subjetividad, objetivos tal vez válidos en ese tiempo y espacio de constitución de los estados nacionales. Sin embargo, este nuevo siglo nos presenta nuevos desafíos ligados a la globalidad, que de algún modo cuestiona las fronteras y nos invita a aceptar la diversidad como parte constitutiva de nuestra realidad.

Es seguramente el estado a través de sus políticas lingüísticas, ligadas a cuestiones que exceden por mucho el plano lingüístico y deben ser analizadas en función “de las coyunturas en las que se producen y de los intereses que encarnan” (Arnoux, 2015), quien debe abogar por la defensa de la diversidad lingüística y la consecuente adopción de una perspectiva multicultural en el seno de las instituciones educativas. Los docentes no hacen sino reflejar, en la medida de sus posibilidades, las políticas emanadas de la administración nacional en materia lingüística. Como se desprende de la lectura del informe “Invertir en la diversidad cultural y el diálogo intercultural” (UNESCO 2009) el rechazo por parte de los docentes de la lengua de sus alumnos es también el rechazo de su cultura, sus valores, su concepción del mundo, su identidad misma. Se niega el “diálogo, como espacio abierto a la reflexión, a la formulación de nuevos puntos de partida para la enseñanza y nuevos puntos de encuentro que nos permitan avanzar juntos en procura de un mundo más equitativo” (Báez, 2010). La lengua no debería convertirse en un factor de discriminación sino por el contrario debería reconocerse como un espacio de encuentro y mutuo enriquecimiento. Nosotros, como docentes, debemos trabajar desde las aulas para revalorizar la diversidad lingüística, fomentando así el respeto por el otro, que es a la vez tan distinto y tan parecido a mí. Se trata de una decisión política sin duda; de decidir el modelo de país que promovemos, el concepto de cultura que transmitimos, la noción de nación que favorecemos.

La coexistencia de diferentes lenguas, sea lenguas aborígenes o lenguajes de señas, no hacen sino reflejar la coexistencia de culturas dentro de un mundo que no puede definirse sin atender a la diversidad, rasgo constitutivo de su esencia en este aquí y ahora. Las instituciones educativas no deberían ignorar las demandas de la sociedad toda en cuanto a la inclusión, la aceptación de la diversidad, la creación de un mundo mejor para todos quienes abrazamos la multiculturalidad.

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Los círculos socráticos para la promoción de la lectura en el aula ILE

Socratic circles for the reading promotion in the EFL classroom

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RESUMEN

El siguiente estudio aborda el preocupante hábito lector en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE), donde la lectura se entiende como una tarea sin más estímulo que el superarla. La propuesta principal de nuestro ensayo es el fomentar la lectura colectiva a través de círculos socráticos para motivar a los estudiantes y cultivar el hábito lector en la asignatura de inglés, especialmente en niveles superiores. El ensayo se estructura en tres bloques conectados entre sí: contextualización teórica sobre la lectura, reflexiones académicas sobre la lectura en lengua extranjera y propuestas para renovar enfoques pedagógicos en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, abogando por una actualización dinámica y fresca que trascienda métodos ya obsoletos. Nuestro enfoque se fundamenta en estrategias cooperativas respaldadas por autores como Agulló (2011), Mendoza (2000) y Daniels (2002).

Palabras clave: círculos socráticos; hábito lector; inglés; lectura; lengua extranjera.

ABSTRACT

The following study addresses the concerning reading habit in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, where reading is perceived as a task with no further incentive than completing it. The main proposal of our essay is to promote collective reading through Socratic circles to motivate students and foster reading habits in the English subject, especially at higher levels. The essay is structured into three interconnected blocks: theoretical contextualization on reading, academic reflections on reading in a foreign language, and proposals to renew pedagogical approaches in teaching English as a foreign language, advocating for a dynamic and fresh update that transcends outdated methods. Our approach is grounded in cooperative strategies supported by authors such as Agulló (2011), Mendoza (2000), and Daniels (2002).

Keywords: English; foreign language; reading habits; reading; Socratic circles.

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Introducción

En el territorio español la percepción en torno a la lectura es devastadora. Un estudio del Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (2016) confirma que el 69.4% de entrevistados cree que España mantiene un escaso hábito lector, y que esto se debe a la falta de interés hasta en un 42.3% de los casos. Estos resultados no recogen mucha más información sobre lectura en lengua materna y tampoco reflejan el tipo de texto, su intencionalidad ni motivación, que son fenómenos que, como veremos a continuación, son fundamentales a la hora de trabajar el hábito lector. En otras palabras, se podría advertir que un gran porcentaje del estudiantado entiende la lectura desde su uso meramente transaccional y académico sin prestar mucha atención a su uso recreativo o interpersonal.

La lectura, además, ha demostrado ser una de las destrezas más complejas de abordar desde la enseñanza de lengua extranjera y, como veremos a lo largo de este trabajo, esto se debe al entrelazado de diferentes realidades: profesionales, generacionales, motivacionales o materiales, por nombrar algunas. Parece sensato pensar que en estos últimos años, y debido a diferentes cuestiones como la sobreexposición a medios audiovisuales, las crisis de los sures y sus respectivas olas migratorias al norte, de clara tendencia anglófona, o la instrumentalización mercantil del inglés, se ha priorizado la enseñanza de esta lengua como un medio vehicular donde la comprensión de textos escritos se entiende como algo anecdótico fagocitado por la promoción de habilidades más inmediatas como la comunicación o comprensión oral y la producción escrita.

Este estudio tiene como objetivo principal generar una propuesta sobre lectura colectiva, a través de círculos socráticos, con el fin de motivar a los estudiantes y generar un hábito lector. Recordamos en este punto que la finalidad de nuestro trabajo no es en sí el trabajar la comprensión lectora, esto, de hecho, sucede de manera no consciente mientras trabajamos nuestra función principal, la de fomentar la lectura. Para este fin, la fundamentación teórica de nuestro trabajo parte de estrategias de trabajo cooperativo y es que, los círculos de lectura han confirmado ser una estrategia más que competente para nuestro objetivo. Algunos autores como Agulló (2011), Mendoza (2000) o Daniels (2002), son esenciales en nuestro acercamiento a la lectura cooperativa.

El trabajo está claramente dividido en tres bloques que, lejos de ser inconexos, se vertebran entre sí. Por un lado, encontramos una contextualización teórica alrededor de la cuestión lectora. Primeramente, exponemos algunos conceptos y teorizaciones básicas para después entrelazarlos con algunas reflexiones académicas sobre la lectura en lengua extranjera. Empezamos así con un acercamiento etimológico al término, acompañado por una breve descripción lexicográfica, a través de las palabras de María Moliner. Continuamos este bloque con la propuesta de Agulló (2011), que nos ofrece una trasposición del modelo lecto-escritor a lengua extranjera. Recogemos aquí un breve recorrido por las principales tendencias y corrientes didácticas en torno a la cuestión de la lectura. Continuamos con aproximación al hábito y gusto por la lectura a través de algunos términos cercanos a la psicología educativa, como la motivación o el interés. Una vez desglosado lo anterior, lo aplicaremos a la cuestión sobre la que gira nuestro

Exponiendo la realidad no solo de la lectura en lengua extranjera en su contexto global, sino, además, desde la experiencia nacional, creemos que nuestra revisiones y aportaciones son un paradigma que considerar dentro de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Creemos que es necesario una actualización más fresca y dinámica que comprenda la lectura más allá de la tarea tradicional, textos poco adecuados, y aproximaciones obsoletas.

La lectura en el aula de ILE

Creemos pertinente comenzar esta discusión rescatando la definición de lectura que nos ofrece María Moliner (1998), puesto que parece introducir una sensibilidad para con la comprensión de textos en lengua extranjera. Comienza con un pequeño boceto etimológico y recoge que el término proviene del latín *légere*, *coger*, *escoger*, *reparar* o *pasar lista*, además del griego *lego*, *leyenda*, *leyente* o *listo*. Si bien no podemos asegurar la intención de Moliner (1998) al escribir estas acepciones, parece sensato afirmar que estas parecen estar atravesadas por, al menos, un interés traductológico. Así el diccionario recoge lectura como “interpretar mentalmente o traduciéndolos en sonidos los signos de un escrito” y continúa “ser capaz de leer y entender un idioma extranjero” [énfasis agregado]. Atendiendo a esta propuesta, podríamos definir la lectura en lengua extranjera como un proceso que pretende, desde la negociación entre el lector y el enunciado, desvelar los significados lingüísticos y narrativos del texto.

Es una tarea casi imposible recoger todas las hipótesis y prácticas alrededor de la lectura en inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE a partir de ahora), y también sería inútil crear cronologías o taxonomías. Como veremos a continuación, las metodologías alrededor de la lectura en lengua extranjera son una trenza de convenciones y tendencias didácticas que cada docente o administración interpreta y que es siempre susceptible a alteraciones. De hecho, después de leer mucha literatura al respecto (Agulló, 2011; Arroyo, 1998; Mendoza, 2000; Ruiz Cecilia 2010), deducimos que muchas de las teorías que se aportan son una antología, o collage, de diferentes escuelas y corrientes respecto a esta cuestión. Entrar a elaborar cada una de estas supone presentar un análisis enrevesado y repetitivo. Lo que aquí proponemos es una breve recopilación de algunas reflexiones alrededor de la lectura, pero, como decíamos más arriba, este resumen no es representativo y lo que se dibuja aquí son solo algunos apuntes dentro de la escuela académica. Empezaremos entonces a partir de los procesos más básicos en la adquisición de esta comprensión, aunque, debido a los objetivos de este estudio, nos centraremos solo en algunas propuestas teóricas. Más tarde, seguiremos investigando el transcurso de la destreza lectora hasta concluir en sus diferentes metodologías. Tras esta breve aportación, ahondaremos en el hábito lector y el fomento a la lectura como elementos sustanciales de esta competencia y, así, dispondremos de un pequeño glosario de términos necesarios para entender esta cuestión; términos como autonomía, motivación, o interés.

Podríamos hablar del proceso lector desde diferentes disciplinas, nos centramos, no obstante, en el esquema lecto-escritor propuesto por Mendoza (2000), y ampliado por Agulló (2011). El proceso lecto-escritor es uno de los fenómenos más investigados dentro de la academia, y así esta propuesta diferencia tres sucesos específicos: la decodificación, o la traducción de símbolos a un espectro visual y fonológico, también llamadas microdestrezas descriptivas (Caballero de Rodas et al, 1999), la comprensión, que se entiende a través de diferentes estrategias para el análisis específico (palabras) y global (contextos y tramas) del texto y, por último, también intervienen las habilidades de autorregulación necesarias para evaluar dónde y cuándo se aplican dichas estrategias (Arroyo, 1998, como se citó en Luque Agulló, 2011). En este último proceso intervienen una serie de microdestrezas cognitivas que se sirven de los códigos descriptivos que elaboramos anteriormente para identificar, sintetizar y procesar significados (Caballero de Rodas, 1999).

Como ya apuntábamos en el párrafo introductorio, las discusiones alrededor de la lectura en lengua extranjera son coincidentes y se complementan las unas a las otras. De hecho, Agulló (2011) rescata el modelo lecto-escritor propuesto anteriormente por Arroyo (1998) y Mendoza (2000), aunque este último autor añade unas fases intermedias dentro del proceso que resultan afines a nuestro estudio sobre la promoción lectora. Así, entre la fase de decodificación y

comprensión, el académico aporta una nueva etapa que llamará precompensación, que se apoya en las expectativas del estudiante para con el texto y que, a su vez, esto resultará en una conformación de hipótesis y conclusiones. El lector entonces continúa en su lectura a través de la “formación, comprobación, confirmación y modificación (si procede) de hipótesis e inferencias fundamentadas tanto en los elementos textuales como en la experiencia previa del sujeto que lee” (Ruiz Cecilia, 2010).

Si bien el modelo de Mendoza (2000) sigue una evolución orgánica con una fase de comprensión similar a jerarquías anteriores, sí culmina con una nueva intervención que él denomina fase de interpretación. Esta se refiere a la conclusión del lector tras la digestión del texto, aunque esto presupone que el estudiante ya ha comprendido la lectura en todas sus magnitudes. No podemos olvidar aquí, como así deduce Ruiz Cecilia (2010), las diferentes transversalidades que intervienen en esta reflexión final, y que van desde lo cultural, hasta la ubicación intertextual del lector (lecturas previas, estado de ánimo, conocimiento del mundo, bagaje cultural...), ya que estos elementos “entablan un proceso dialógico e interactivo que conduce hacia la interpretación del texto” (2010). Este acercamiento a la lectura parece fundamental para nuestro ensayo, puesto que entre las funciones para que se cumplan estas condiciones de recepción lectora el autor incluye lo siguiente: estimular la participación lectora, reclamar su atención y facilitarle los reconocimientos y la generación de expectativas (Ruiz Cecilia, 2010), lo cual está reflejado en nuestra propuesta.

Si bien este proceso lecto-escritor está justificado en cualquier proceso de lectura, Agulló (2011) nos presenta su aplicabilidad en ILE. La investigadora habla de una transferencia, o interdependencia lingüística, de estrategias lectoras que sucede de lengua materna a extranjera, o al revés. También indaga en las herramientas de compensación que utiliza el estudiante cuando se enfrenta a problemas relacionados con la comprensión lectora. Según esta teoría, el lector ‘compensa’ prestando una mayor atención a contextos más globales y conceptuales, que no lingüísticos. Esto también lo han elaborado otros académicos (Bravo, 2008; Parodi, 1997) que aportan al discurso de la comprensión textual y la lectura crítica cuando dicen que, al enfrentarse a un texto en lengua extranjera, el estudiante se apoya en conocimientos previos para generar un cuerpo coherente dentro de la unidad textual. Aunque sí es cierto que Agulló (2011) apunta que los estudiantes con más carencias competenciales suelen centrarse en cuestiones de corte más lingüístico, también nos señala que es primordial tener un dominio lector en L1 para poder acceder a estas estrategias de traslación ya que, en un escenario ideal, el estudiante empezará a elaborar esquemas formales y lingüísticos con el fin de organizar la información que se le presenta en la nueva lengua.

Este proceso lecto-escritor no sucede de manera accidental, necesita de un acompañamiento metodológico y docente para su correcta ejecución. A continuación, presentamos algunas de las corrientes y cuestiones más discutidas dentro de la comprensión lectora en lengua extranjera. Por ejemplo, en su artículo “La influencia del texto literario en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera: de la teoría a la práctica,” Gómez Rodríguez (2015) recoge brevemente la evolución y percepción de algunos profesionales con respecto a la inclusión de la lectura como una metodología eficiente y pedagógica en el aprendizaje y adquisición de la lengua extranjera. Las líneas que vienen a continuación son entonces un resumen de la recolecta bibliográfica que encontramos en dicho ensayo. Durante los setenta y ochenta, dice el académico, algunos especialistas (Mckay, 1982; Schloss, 1918) eran poco optimistas al afrontar estas dinámicas lectoras ya que, como recoge Zafeiriadou (2011), se pensaba que las florituras y ornamentos que muchas veces acompañan al texto literario podían suponer un trauma en el aprendizaje del estudiante. En esta línea, algunos académicos (Short y Candlin, 1984) defienden una metodología basada en la enseñanza de gramática instrumental

y diálogos sencillos que se ajustan a los libros de la asignatura. Si bien las nuevas vanguardias comunicativas han cambiado esta panorámica decimonónica, todavía hay algunos autores (McRae, 1991) reticentes a la incorporación de fuentes literarias como una herramienta metodológica en esta disciplina. Nuestra postura, quizás más conciliadora y cauta, coincide con aquella de Buckledee (2002) cuando dice que, si bien la lectura en ILE puede ser una herramienta ventajosa, la selección de textos es, en ocasiones, torpemente seleccionada por los docentes y esto obstaculiza el ritmo de aprendizaje. De hecho, Gómez Rodríguez analiza este tipo de textos y concluye que son repetitivos, ya que cuentan con “las mismas secciones, aproximadamente el mismo número de actividades y los mismos tipos de práctica [...] repitiéndose el mismo patrón” (2015).

Volviendo al panorama actual y metiéndonos en las diferentes estructuras que acompañan a esta competencia, el Consejo de Europa, a través del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia de las Lenguas (2021), MCERL a partir de ahora, nos ofrece una escala instrumental en la aproximación a la lectura en ILE. Por un lado, nos encontramos con el propósito de la lectura y este, a su vez, puede derivarse en: leer para orientarse y leer en busca de información y argumentos. En el primer caso, también conocido como lectura exploratoria, encontramos dos modalidades: la lectura rápida, para decidir qué fragmentos se leerán con detenimiento (skimming), y la lectura ágil, con el fin de encontrar una pieza de información específica (scanning). En el segundo caso, de lectura para la búsqueda de información y argumentos, se incluye también la lectura de fragmentos informativos. El informe del MCERL también hace referencia a la lectura por placer y como esta categoría no es necesariamente literaria, más el lector puede interesarse en material impreso o digital como blogs, biografías, revistas o periódicos. El marco también elabora en detalle cada una de estas jerarquías, aunque aquí aportamos una tabla de corte más general sobre lo que se entiende por comprensión lectora en sus diferentes niveles:

Figura 1. Comprensión de lectura en general (MCER, 2021)

Comprensión de lectura en general	
C2	Comprende prácticamente cualquier tipo de texto, incluidos textos abstractos y de estructura compleja, o textos literarios y no literarios con muchos coloquialismos. Comprende una amplia variedad de textos largos y complejos, y aprecia distinciones sutiles de estilo y significado, tanto implícito como explícito.
C1	Comprende con todo detalle textos extensos y complejos, tanto si se relacionan con su especialidad como si no, siempre que pueda volver a leer las secciones difíciles. Comprende una amplia gama de textos, incluidos textos literarios, artículos de periódicos o revistas, así como publicaciones profesionales o académicas, siempre que pueda releer el texto y que tenga acceso a herramientas de consulta.
B2	Lee con un alto grado de independencia, adaptando el estilo y la velocidad de lectura a distintos textos y finalidades y utilizando fuentes de referencia apropiadas de forma selectiva. Tiene un amplio vocabulario activo de lectura, pero puede tener alguna dificultad con modismos poco frecuentes.
B1	Lee textos sencillos de carácter fáctico que abordan temas relacionados con su área de interés, con un nivel de comprensión satisfactorio.
A2	Comprende textos breves y sencillos sobre asuntos conocidos con un vocabulario de uso muy frecuente cotidiano o relativo al trabajo. Comprende textos breves y sencillos que contienen vocabulario de mayor frecuencia, incluida una buena proporción de internacionalismos.
A1	Comprende textos muy breves y sencillos, leyendo frase por frase, captando nombres y palabras conocidos y frases básicas, y volviendo a leer cuando lo necesita.
Pre-A1	Reconoce palabras/signos conocidas/os acompañadas/os de imágenes, como en el caso de la carta de un restaurante de comida rápida con fotos o un libro ilustrado que contenga vocabulario conocido.

Relacionado con las estrategias cognitivas que mencionábamos anteriormente, es imposible ignorar en este trabajo la taxonomía de Bloom (1956), a quien ya nombramos más arriba, y sus reacciones posteriores. Miller (1996) propone, basándose en las teorizaciones de Bloom, un acercamiento holístico a la lectura que parte de lo sensorial, y es que el académico entiende el texto y sus partes como un todo y así este se relaciona con la producción y comprensión escrita además de oral, sin olvidar sus implicaciones culturales. Esta apreciación holística también será fundamental en futuras propuestas que busquen la intervención lectora desde la promoción. Miller (1996) invita a los docentes a participar de una selección meticulosa de estos textos para así movernos en una secuencia que parte de la comprensión de la tarea a su producción. Esta secuencia sucede en un gradiente de dificultad cognitiva que parte de una 'prelectura', o pre-reading, que activa el conocimiento previo del estudiante a través de determinadas estrategias de descubrimiento (skimming) para así detectar sus dificultades y necesidades. Una vez superada esta etapa, el alumno se enfrenta a una lectura inicial, o initial reading, para identificar las características y significados principales del texto (argumentos, trama, personajes o diálogos). Para esto, el docente debe ayudar al estudiante a activar recursos cognitivos asociados a sus expectativas para con el texto a través de discusiones y otros ejercicios. La hipótesis de Miller (1996) concluye con una relectura, o rereading, que consiste en encontrarse repetidamente ante el texto. En este punto de la secuencia, el estudiante debe dialogar con el contenido general para así convertirse en un agente activo a través de diferentes actividades como juegos de rol, lluvias de ideas, finales alternativos, o creaciones artísticas, por nombrar solo algunas.

Las actividades que se mencionan arriba, además, pueden organizarse, dependiendo de su intencionalidad, en (i) informativas, aquellas enfocadas en acercar al estudiante a una obra literaria y los contextos que la rodean (historia, valores, estilo, narrativa...) y (ii) formativas que, además de un carácter meramente epistemológico o conceptual, también promueve la motivación a la lectura a través de un acercamiento íntimo al texto. Esto se consigue transformando al estudiante en un agente activo que interacciona con la obra de una manera casi lúdica (Quintanal, 1999). Para ejemplificar lo anterior, el autor nos ofrece una serie de actividades que, en caso de ser informativas, pueden ser tareas investigación (estudios del autor, géneros literarios, estudios temáticos...), charlas-conferencias, exposiciones o visitas, por nombrar algunas. El carácter didáctico de las actividades formativas en la animación lectora cobra fuerza cuando leemos las propuestas de Quintanal (1999): juegos con el lenguaje (composiciones, imaginativos, manipulaciones...), proyecciones, sesiones de animación lectora (lecturas colectivas, narraciones, ilustradores, encuentros con autores), cuentacuentos, concursos, creaciones literarias o plásticas, entre muchas otras.

Como hemos visto a lo largo de este ensayo, la lectura en ILE es un proceso complejo que, aunque requiere de unos andamiajes y costumbres adquiridas en la lengua materna, también comprende unas estrategias específicas de aplicación y ejecución. Esta cuestión cuenta con diferentes escuelas y enfoques y, así, algunos profesionales favorecen la utilización de material literario, mientras otros insisten en que el texto debe ser meramente instrumental y didáctico. Esto es un debate que escapa a nuestro trabajo, pero si bien algunos profesores o expertos consideran la enseñanza del inglés desde una perspectiva meramente instrumental y social, otros siguen creyendo en la naturaleza filológica de la asignatura, como así sucede con la asignatura de Lengua Castellana y Literatura, por ejemplo. De nuestro ensayo también extraemos que una pedagogía mixta es posible, a través de diferentes prácticas como puede ser la modulación de procesos (Miller, 1996) la organización de tareas (Quintanal, 1999), o, como estudiaremos a continuación, la organización de trabajo (Obregón, 2006).

Promoción de la lectura en ILE

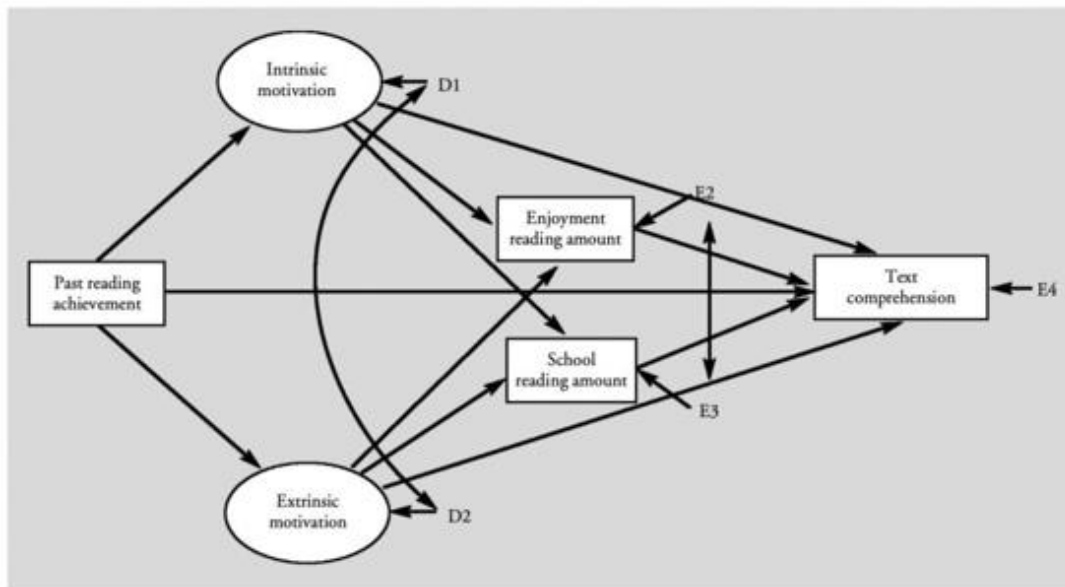
La promoción o el hábito por la lectura es un término per se difícil de definir puesto que lo atraviesan muchas variables subjetivas. La autora del Valle (2012) recoge las definiciones de diferentes académicos en torno a esta cuestión. Así, por ejemplo, nos dice que Salazar (2006) define el hábito a la lectura como un fenómeno intencional por el cual la persona lee frecuentemente por placer o entretenimiento. Landa (2005), por otro lado, confirma lo anterior cuando afirma que el bienestar que se produce en el proceso de lectura facilita su hábito. Otros académicos, dice del Valle (2012), se centran en la frecuencia del proceso. Así Fowler (2000) habla de transformar la capacidad lectora en una necesidad, o Molina (2006), por ejemplo, enfatiza en la repetición como una herramienta de afianzamiento. Además, Salazar y Ponce (1999) nos aportan los factores necesarios para medir el hábito de lectura: la temática o preferencia lectora, la frecuencia, las primeras experiencias lectoras, la lectura escolar, la cultura lectora en la familia o la disponibilidad de materiales y espacios para este fin. Nosotros coincidimos con la siguiente afirmación que, de alguna manera, recoge todo lo anterior:

Para que se llegue a un buen hábito lector, es necesario que el niño se lo pase bien leyendo. Para conseguir buenos lectores, capaces de asimilar la información que les proporciona la lectura y hacer un uso creativo de ella, es esencial la actitud emocional que se cree ante la misma. Por eso, el niño ha de sentir que la lectura forma parte de la vida, que es un medio extraordinario de comunicación y de información (Colomer, 1996: 3).

Si bien ambos conceptos, comprensión y hábito lector, pueden ser excluyentes en un contexto regular, esto no sucede así en el ámbito escolar. Muchas veces el estudiante puede ser muy competente a la hora de afrontar una lectura, pero entender esta como una tarea esporádica a completar, sin continuidad posterior ni deleite. No obstante, la literatura científica demuestra que el compromiso y el interés por la lectura, es decir el hábito, es un factor estrechamente vinculado con el rendimiento en general y, en específico, con la comprensión lectora (Gil Flores, 2011). Como recogen las evaluaciones PISA (Programme International form Student Assesment) o PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), los estudiantes españoles siguen por debajo de la media europea en cuanto a comprensión y hábito de lectura. Además, algunos estudios demuestran que las nuevas tecnologías han interferido en la concepción de hábito de lectura, que ahora sucede a través de mensajería instantánea o internet (Gil Flores 2011).

Cuando hablamos de fomentar el hábito lector hay un concepto que tampoco podemos obviar: la motivación. Entre la mucha literatura que encontramos escrita sobre esta cuestión, nos parece interesante el modelo propuesto por Wang y Guthrie (2004). Antes de continuar explicando el modelo, creemos necesario explicar la diferencia entre motivación intrínseca y extrínseca. La primera, recogen los autores, son independientes a estímulos externos y se nutre de una curiosidad innata y de una involucración espontánea. Mientras que la motivación llega en el segundo caso a través de reguladores externos y que, además, van acompañados de demandas, requerimientos y recompensas. Los autores recogen estudios en diferentes materias, desde la psicología hasta la didáctica del inglés, y concluyen lo siguiente:

Figura 2. Modelo de motivación estructural en la comprensión de textos (Wang y Guthrie 2004)



Este esquema nos facilita una lectura de las relaciones directas e indirectas entre varios factores como la motivación intrínseca (D1 en la figura), extrínseca (D2), cantidad de lectura en el aula, lectura por placer, comprensión lectora y los logros conseguidos en esta destreza. Basta un vistazo para percatarse que este modelo sigue un patrón espejo que se replica a sí mismo. Los autores pretenden desafiar teorías binaristas y dicotómicas que entendían ambas motivaciones como parámetros opuestos y que se mueven de manera paralela en los procesos de aprendizaje. Ellos, al contrario, las entrelazan a través de diferentes escenarios. Sus resultados nos indican que si bien puede existir una involucración intrínseca (E2) en nuestro acercamiento a la lectura por placer, este también puede suceder en una lectura escolar, y lo mismo aplica al desafío personal (E3) que supone enfrentarse a un texto. Ellos sugieren que la finalidad de estos niveles motivacionales deriva en una búsqueda de reconocimiento (E4) y que, en el proceso, se alcanzan los objetivos, que en este caso se relacionan con la comprensión del texto.

Si bien este modelo parece controvertido y problemático, coincidimos con algunas de sus conclusiones. En primer lugar, habría que cuestionar no solo como este interés supuestamente innato podría estar viciado por parámetros sociales, contextuales, culturales y generacionales, sino también qué subyace en esta involucración espontánea. Lo contrario sería ignorar décadas de estudios en antropología cultural, como de hecho sugieren los autores. El estudio nos arroja unos resultados interesantes, y es que ellos apuestan por un modelo mixto, ya que entienden que es complicado abarcar ambas motivaciones como elementos aislados y herméticos. Concluyen que, mientras los estudiantes más brillantes se centran en el rendimiento, logros o dominio, los estudiantes menos aventajados se enfocan en esferas más sociales como divertirse, hacer amigos o cumplir con las demandas escolares. Es por eso que, al tratar con grupos heterogéneos, es necesario plantear metodologías motivacionales mixtas.

Otro concepto que parece innato a la promoción de la lectura es la autonomía personal. Fraguera-Vale et al. (2016) definen autonomía como la libertad de opción ante las diferentes ofertas en las que ocupar nuestro tiempo libre. Si en los párrafos anteriores hablábamos de parámetros como motivación, parece consuetudinario que, si el estudiante siente placer al leer, este decida voluntariamente ocupar su tiempo libre a esta actividad. Quizás más interesante como docentes es la discusión que sugiere que esta autonomía, o preferencia, parece estar

viciada por factores externos como la importancia a la lectura. También se apunta que aquellos alumnos que dedican su tiempo libre a leer obtienen mejores resultados académicos. No solo mejores resultados, sino que el estudiante se muestra más crítico con el sistema educativo, que lo considera 'tradicional' metodológicamente hablando (Fraguela-Vale et al., 2016). Se confirma entonces que la lectura despierta un espíritu crítico.

Ya hemos elaborado sobre los beneficios del hábito lector, pero ¿cómo se consigue involucrar al alumno en este proceso? del Valle (2012) nos ofrece algunas alternativas y propuestas desde la academia. Algunos autores (Paredes, 2004; Polaino- Lorente, 1997), por ejemplo, apuntan que los procesos y actitudes en la enseñanza, tanto en casa o como en el instituto, son esenciales. Tanto las familias como el docente deben ser comprensivos y no presionar al estudiante a trabajar lecturas determinadas, a organizar sus tiempos ni sus métodos (Muñoz y Hernández, 2011). El marco también nos ofrece cuatro etapas que suceden en la formación del hábito lector: la primera etapa, o incompetencia inconsciente, cuando el estudiante es inexperto así que debemos identificar factores favorables para crear un ambiente que invite a la lectura. La segunda etapa, o incompetencia consciente, donde el estudiante toma consciencia de la importancia de la lectura, pero se enfrenta a ciertas incomodidades cognitivas. Durante la competencia consciente, que sucede durante la tercera etapa, el alumno tiene cierta sensación de logro y placer al leer, además de empezar a adoptar secuencias del comportamiento lector: elección del texto, finalidad de la lectura, aplicación de técnicas y estrategias o modulación de ritmos y tiempos, por nombrar algunas. Finalmente, en esta última etapa, también conocida como competencia inconsciente, ya se ha formado el hábito y se domina todo el proceso y sus partes de manera fluida (del Valle, 2012).

Como hemos observado en este breve capítulo, adquirir un hábito o costumbre lectora es un proceso complejo que implica procesos cognitivos y sociales que van más allá de la comprensión. La promoción de la lectura en lengua extranjera supone entonces un desafío aún mayor. Esta actividad debe ser implantada teniendo en cuenta las variables ya mencionadas o, de lo contrario, podría transformarse en un obstáculo en el proceso de habituación a la lectura, incluso en su lengua nativa. No puede esperarse, por ejemplo, que la continuidad y frecuencia con la que el estudiante lee en L1 y L2 sea la misma, puesto que el segundo caso el esfuerzo cognitivo es mayor e involucra una serie de estrategias en el proceso lector que, si bien no suceden de manera orgánica en su lengua nativa, si son fácilmente reconocidas y ejecutadas. En el caso de ILE, además, podríamos trabajar la autonomía y la motivación conjuntamente. Si bien no podemos confirmar lo siguiente, es comprensible que un estudiante sienta una atracción menos espontánea por una literatura o textos en una lengua que no domina, precisamente por este esfuerzo cognitivo que ya mencionamos. Es el trabajo del docente entonces el proveer al estudiante de unas pautas y estrategias específicas para acompañarlo en el proceso hasta que surja dicha autonomía. Estas pautas pueden trabajarse desde la motivación intrínseca y extrínseca a través de determinadas actividades programadas. Nos referimos a, por ejemplo, negociar con el estudiante el tópico de la lectura, acompañar el material con referencias en lengua materna, a través de metodologías colaborativas y didácticas, recompensas académicas y/o personales, etcétera.

Círculos Socráticos como propuesta para el fomento de la lectura en ILE

Tras este pequeño glosario científico en torno a la cuestión del hábito lector, solo nos queda preguntarnos en qué afecta los círculos socráticos a la motivación o el interés por la lectura. Atwell (1998) ya escribía sobre cómo los talleres, que podrían ser unos precursores de los círculos de lectura ya que comparten dinámicas similares, despiertan un interés que no se produciría de manera solitaria. Discutir, dialogar y reflexionar sobre un texto en comunidad,

dice la autora, nos permite involucrarnos mucho más con el texto. Copeland (2005) también refleja casos personales de estudiantes que, tras trabajar la lectura de manera colaborativa, se empiezan a interesar en la lectura de manera autónoma. Concluye el autor que, a través de la lectura repetida y el análisis profundo del material, los estudiantes aprenden a explorar los diferentes significados e interpretaciones del texto. Otros autores también corroboran que la lectura compartida, o círculos de lectura, son fundamentales en la promoción de la lectura (Carrison y Ernst-Slavit 2005; Kupfer 2018). Más interesante aún es la hipótesis planteada por Sai y Hsu (2007) cuando dicen que, mientras los modelos de lectura tradicional se centran únicamente en promover la comprensión lectora, los círculos socráticos han demostrado funcionar como propulsores en el interés por la lectura (Kupfer 2018).

Estos son esferas de discusión donde los estudiantes comparten experiencias y reflexiones en torno al texto. Algunos autores (Copeland, 2005) también los llaman círculos socráticos, ya que el filósofo convocaba a sus alumnos y, en lugar de darles una lección magistral, los hacía discutir hasta llegar a una reflexión común. Los objetivos principales de estos espacios colaborativos con relación a la comprensión de textos lengua extranjera son variados, y es que parten desde aprender a discutir sobre literatura hasta vincular el texto con experiencias personales. Además, sintonizar la comprensión lectora de grupo, dar opiniones, relacionar la tarea con otras áreas de aprendizaje de la asignatura como la escritura, ortografía o estilo, o profundizar en el conocimiento de contextos anglosajones, entre otros (Obregón 2006).

Esta metodología, que bebe claramente del aprendizaje colaborativo, es fundamental para nuestro estudio sobre el fomento de la lectura, ya que se sustenta bajo premisas democratizadoras y participativas. Es decir, en palabras de Lucero (2003), el trabajo colaborativo consiste en propiciar la creación de espacios donde los estudiantes son responsables de su aprendizaje a través de la discusión y exploración comunitaria o grupal. El artículo también nos ofrece unos elementos básicos con el fin de propiciar esta metodología en el aula. Se centra especialmente en la interdependencia positiva, o las condiciones organizacionales y de funcionamiento dentro del grupo, formándose relaciones interdependientes entre los estudiantes. La autora hace hincapié en la interacción ya que, según ella, la discusión entre el estudiantado fomenta el aprendizaje. Aunque se enfatiza en el grupo como un ente interdependiente, también hay espacio para las contribuciones individuales, donde cada miembro del grupo asume su tarea y su lugar para contribuir. Finalmente, también se centran en las habilidades personales y de grupo, ya que la experiencia del trabajo colaborativo potencia su crecimiento personal y las competencias interpersonales.

El carácter interpersonal del aprendizaje colaborativo se ve reflejado en su estructura más inmediata: la formación de grupo; que democratiza el proceso de aprendizaje convirtiendo al grupo en agentes activos en el aula y que, además, colaboran de manera transversal y horizontal. Esto último se consigue gracias al reparto de roles, donde cada estudiante toma un perfil específico para cumplir con unas tareas dentro del grupo. La Consejería de Educación del Gobierno de Canarias, por ejemplo, nos ofrece, en su página web, unas directrices para esta asignación de roles, aunque esto no es algo estático, sino que pueden generarse nuevos perfiles o reagrupar tareas. La Consejería entonces nos propone: (i) un portavoz, que coordina y actúa como representante del grupo. Además (ii) un secretario que registra el diario del trabajo realizado. Es importante también la figura del (iii) moderador, que anima al equipo a continuar con las tareas, regula las presentaciones y plazos de entrega y coordina las tareas y, finalmente, un (iv) gestor del orden y/o tiempo, que controla el tiempo de la actividad, cuida que la tarea esté limpia y ordenada, además de supervisar que el grupo no sea disruptivo cuando están trabajando conjuntamente.

Como podemos observar, estos roles son muy generales y es por eso que la literatura alrededor de los círculos de lectura nos presenta perfiles más esclarecedores: el líder, que conduce y motiva la discusión sobre el texto; el detective, que investiga sobre el texto y sus formatos; el constructor de puentes, que vincula la literatura con los participantes del círculo; el reportero, que presenta noticias sobre las tramas del libro y, finalmente, el artista, que apoya las reflexiones del grupo a través de la creación de material artístico (Daniels, 2002). Ya hemos hablado anteriormente de la importancia de las relaciones interpersonales dentro del grupo y, si bien esto es característico a cualquier trabajo colaborativo, los investigadores en círculos socráticos (Mohamed 2014, Montoya 2006 o Ulbrich 2013) sugieren que, precisamente en estos espacios, los vínculos entre estudiantes son esenciales. Esto se debe, coinciden los académicos, a que estas tareas necesitan de unas reflexiones mucho más personales a las de, quizás, la resolución de un problema matemático. Así, Daniels (2002) nos ofrece unos ingredientes fundamentales para que estos círculos de lectura funcionen.

- (i) Los estudiantes eligen sus propios libros [aquí utilizaremos ‘textos’ al ser más genérico].
- (ii) Basándose en la elección del texto, se forman pequeños grupos de manera temporal.
- (iii) Cada grupo debe leer un texto totalmente diferente.
- (iv) Los grupos se reúnen de manera regular para discutir sus lecturas.
- (v) Los participantes realizarán apuntes o anotaciones para guiarlos durante la discusión.
- (vi) Los tópicos de discusión son propuestos por los estudiantes.
- (vii) Las reuniones del grupo se supone que deben ser una conversación natural y espontánea sobre el texto, por lo que se aceptan apreciaciones personales, digresiones o preguntas abiertas.
- (viii) El profesor actúa como un facilitador, no como un instructor o miembro del grupo.
- (ix) La evaluación sucede a través de la observación del profesor y la autoevaluación de los estudiantes.
- (x) El clima del aula debe ser de diversión y distensión.
- (xi) Cuando se termina el texto, los lectores deben compartir sus resultados con sus compañeros, y después formar nuevos grupos en torno a nuevos textos. [La traducción es propia]

Nos parece interesante la tesis doctoral de Kupfer (2018) puesto que reflexiona sobre esta metodología desde ILE. El autor dice que, obviamente, habrá que tener en cuenta la fluidez del grupo en esta lengua y que esto debe afectar a la formación de grupos. El autor va más allá e indica que resulta ventajoso dejarlos desarrollar algunas tareas en su lengua materna. Especialmente al comienzo del proyecto colaborativo. También sugiere que la elección de textos funciona mejor desde las historias cortas o los poemas, en lugar de centrarse en novelas largas. Incluso invita a trabajar con lecturas editoriales adaptadas. Coincide con Daniels (2002), como así recogíamos anteriormente, en que lo ideal sería proponer diferentes lecturas, y que el estudiante seleccione la que más le atraiga. Pero, al mismo tiempo, nos aporta un estudio japonés donde los investigadores sugieren que los estudiantes aún no se sienten preparados para elegir un texto y prefieren que sean sus profesores los que les proporcionen las lecturas. Esta intervención por parte del docente puede que sea endémica a la lectura en lengua extranjera, puesto que no existe un temor idiomático al enfrentarse a un texto escrito en lengua

materna. Como es lógico, también es necesario dedicar un rol específico al estudio de componentes lingüísticos, ya que es primordial en lengua extranjera.

Parece sensato, entonces, rescatar esta metodología para enfrentar al alumno no solo ante la comprensión de textos en ILE, sino, además, porque este promueve una serie de habilidades que consideramos fundamentales. Lucero (2003) escribe sobre la mejora de habilidades sociales, interacción y comunicación efectiva, integración grupal, incentivo del sentimiento de solidaridad y respeto mutuo, conocimiento democrático, y el estudiante finalmente toma un rol activo en su educación, perdiéndose el miedo a la crítica y la retroalimentación. Creemos fundamental rescatar que los círculos socráticos también mejoran otras habilidades comunicativas como puede ser la expresión oral a través de la confirmación o el rebate de ideas que se sucede en la elaboración de tareas. Por no hablar que estos espacios colaborativos promueven el diálogo en pequeños grupos entre iguales, lo que rompe la barrera de aquellos más introvertidos y con miedo a exponer sus argumentos en el aula ante la mayoría o una figura de autoridad, como es el profesor. Dice Copeland (2005) que estos círculos promueven la comprensión oral o la escucha, ya que se enfrentan a tener que escuchar opiniones y puntos de vista que jamás habían contemplado, por lo que debe existir una voluntad por entender conceptos y términos nuevos que puedan surgir en la discusión. Incluso encuentra una relación directa entre la lectura compartida y la mejora de la expresión escrita, ya que los estudiantes tienden a elaborar escritos más reflexivos y a incorporar elementos gramaticales, sintácticos y léxicos que han trabajado conjuntamente en torno al texto.

Conclusiones

La literatura científica (Copeland, 2005; Gros Salvat y Forés Miravalles, 2013; Kupfer, 2018; López, 2019; Rojo Acosta et al., 2018; Sai y Hsu 2007), ya ha venido sugiriendo que lectura cooperativa desarrolla de manera exponencial la motivación por la lectura, pero nuestro trabajo confirma que hay ciertas dinámicas que pueden catapultar esta estrategia. Podríamos deducir de nuestro estudio lo siguiente:

Por un lado, que el fomento y hábito lector está directamente relacionado, entre otros parámetros, con la promoción de la lectura en los centros escolares. Como indicábamos anteriormente, la lectura en lengua extranjera está, en muchas ocasiones, vinculada a una estrategia obsoleta y repetitiva que consiste en leer libros adaptados y completar actividades similares entre sí. Eso sin nombrar que las lecturas se alejan mucho de las inquietudes de los estudiantes. No es casualidad que, antes estos escenarios tan poco ventajosos, exista una tasa tan baja de adolescentes lectores.

Relacionado con lo anterior, y como demuestran algunos autores (Huei-Yu Wang y Guthrie, 2004), nuestro estudio también confirma que la motivación intrínseca y extrínseca no son factores tan paralelos o antitéticos como podríamos pensar en un principio. El trabajo del docente es también el despertar la motivación innata a través de la motivación extrínseca. Es decir, a través de proyectos que buscan despertar un gusto por la lectura, como es este caso; promoviendo que el estudiante tenga una actitud positiva ante una futura lectura.

Los círculos de lectura funcionan como un espacio donde, como decíamos más arriba, conseguir un hábito por la lectura a través de la reflexión conjunta y las discusiones profesionales entre los miembros del equipo. Eso sin nombrar a que, gracias a la diversificación de funciones en este tipo de proyectos, podemos funcionar desde diferentes tipos de inteligencias y sensibilidades que van más allá del ejercicio memorístico. Además, se prestan a la proyección de ejercicios para trabajar otras cuestiones que van desde lo académico, competencias

lingüísticas, hasta lo interpersonal como, por ejemplo, la educación sexo-afectiva, además del clima en el aula.

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Promoción de la Conciencia Cultural en el ámbito de la Educación Superior

Promoting Cultural Awareness in Higher Education

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RESUMEN

Este estudio aborda la importancia de la conciencia cultural en la educación superior, destacando su papel en el desarrollo integral de estudiantes para un mundo globalizado. Se señala la necesidad de estrategias efectivas y sostenibles, vinculando la conciencia cultural con objetivos educativos y el ambiente académico. La investigación busca analizar las circunstancias existentes para impactar positivamente en la formación de estudiantes y fortalecer las instituciones educativas como agentes de transformación social. Se empleó un diseño exploratorio-explicativo con enfoque triangular concurrente, incluyendo encuestas y entrevistas. La muestra de 20 docentes se seleccionó intencionalmente para representar diversas disciplinas. Se garantizó el consentimiento informado y se siguieron directrices éticas, aunque la limitación geográfica podría afectar la generalización de los resultados. Los resultados destacan el respaldo (80%) a programas culturales en la educación, con el 65% considerando efectivas las prácticas actuales. La participación activa del personal académico es del 70%, impactando positivamente a docentes y estudiantes (90%). Se respalda la integración obligatoria (60%), la formación continua (70%), y la tecnología (75%) para fortalecer la conciencia cultural y la participación estudiantil. Estos hallazgos subrayan la importancia de estrategias pedagógicas adaptativas en la educación superior. Se concluye que los programas culturales impactan positivamente la práctica educativa y la dinámica cultural, contribuyendo a un ambiente académico inclusivo. Se respalda la integración obligatoria y la formación continua en conciencia cultural, destacando la relevancia de la tecnología y la participación estudiantil.

Palabras clave: conciencia cultural; educación superior; estrategias pedagógicas adaptativas; experiencia académica; promoción educativa.

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the importance of cultural awareness in higher education, highlighting its role in the holistic development of students for a globalized world. It points out the need for effective and sustainable strategies, linking cultural awareness with educational objectives and the academic environment. The research seeks to analyze the existing circumstances to positively impact the formation of students and strengthen educational institutions as agents of social transformation. An exploratory-exploratory design with a concurrent triangular approach was employed, including surveys and interviews. The sample of 20 teachers was purposively selected to represent diverse disciplines. Informed consent was guaranteed, and ethical guidelines were followed, although geographic limitation could affect the generalizability of the results. The results highlight support (80%) for

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cultural programs in education, with 65% considering current practices effective. Active participation of academic staff is 70%, positively impacting teachers and students (90%). Mandatory integration (60%), continuing education (70%), and technology (75%) are supported to strengthen cultural awareness and student participation. These findings underscore the importance of adaptive pedagogical strategies in higher education. It is concluded that cultural programs positively impact educational practice and cultural dynamics, contributing to an inclusive academic environment. Mandatory integration and continuing education in cultural awareness is supported, highlighting the relevance of technology and student participation.

Keywords: cultural awareness; higher education; adaptive pedagogical strategies; academic experience; educational promotion.

Introducción

En el marco de la educación superior, el fomento de la conciencia cultural emerge como un componente esencial para una formación integral y globalizada de los estudiantes (Cordero González, 2022; Marles-Betancourt *et al.* 2021; Martínez Lirola, 2020). La justificación científica de este estudio se fundamenta en la necesidad apremiante de comprender y abordar los desafíos contemporáneos relacionados con la diversidad cultural en las instituciones académicas. Esta indagación se erige sobre la premisa de que la conciencia cultural no solo enriquece la experiencia educativa, sino que también contribuye al desarrollo de habilidades interculturales y la preparación de individuos para un mundo cada vez más interconectado (Figuerola, 2022; Juárez Lorencilla 2022; Viguri Axpe *et al.* 2021; Armisén Garrido *et al.* 2020)

En el contexto actual de la investigación, se observa un creciente interés por la integración de la conciencia cultural en el ámbito educativo superior, reflejado en diversos estudios y literatura científica (Rodríguez García, 2020). No obstante, subsisten lagunas significativas en la comprensión de las prácticas efectivas de implementación y los impactos concretos en el aprendizaje y desarrollo estudiantil. Este trabajo se alinea con la continuidad de estos esfuerzos, contribuyendo al corpus existente mediante un enfoque detallado y contextualizado.

La reflexión sobre el estado actual de la investigación revela la necesidad de abordar con mayor profundidad cómo las estrategias específicas de fomento de la conciencia cultural se vinculan con los objetivos educativos y el ambiente académico (Leiva *et al.* 2022; Pareja de Vicente *et al.* 2019). La coherencia entre el estado de la investigación y los objetivos del presente estudio radica en llenar este vacío de conocimiento mediante un análisis detallado y una propuesta concreta de estrategias pedagógicas que promuevan la conciencia cultural de manera efectiva y sostenible.

Es en este contexto que conviene repasar lo que es la conciencia cultural. Para algunos investigadores esta se encuentra relacionada de manera substancial y equivalente con el respeto por la identidad cultural, y se refiere a la capacidad de los individuos para comprender, apreciar y respetar las diversas expresiones culturales presentes en su entorno (Grimson, 2020). Implica la sensibilidad hacia las diferencias culturales, la disposición para aprender sobre otras tradiciones y la habilidad de interactuar de manera efectiva en contextos multiculturales. La conciencia cultural va más allá del reconocimiento superficial de la diversidad, buscando una comprensión profunda que permita a las personas navegar con respeto y empatía en un mundo cada vez más globalizado.

La conciencia cultural desempeña un papel crucial en la educación universitaria al preparar a los estudiantes para enfrentar los desafíos de un mundo diverso y globalizado. En el contexto académico, fomenta la inclusión, la equidad y el respeto mutuo, creando un ambiente propicio para el aprendizaje enriquecido por diversas perspectivas. Además, la conciencia cultural contribuye al desarrollo de habilidades interculturales esenciales para la comunicación efectiva y la colaboración en entornos profesionales diversos. Al integrar la conciencia cultural en la educación superior, se promueve la formación integral de los estudiantes, preparándolos no solo como profesionales competentes, sino como ciudadanos globales conscientes y comprometidos con la diversidad cultural.

Desde una perspectiva axiológica, la relevancia de explorar y fomentar la conciencia cultural en el ámbito de la educación superior radica en la promoción de valores fundamentales como el respeto, la tolerancia y la apreciación de la diversidad (Benet Gil *et al.* 2020). Este enfoque no solo contribuye a la formación ética de los individuos, sino que también fortalece la cohesión social al reconocer y valorar las distintas perspectivas culturales presentes en la comunidad académica.

En el plano ontológico, la conciencia cultural se convierte en un elemento esencial para la construcción de la identidad individual y colectiva (Pirez Noy, 2020). La comprensión profunda de las raíces culturales propias y ajenas permite a los estudiantes situarse en un contexto más amplio, fomentando un sentido de pertenencia y una apreciación más completa de la riqueza que aporta la diversidad cultural al tejido social.

Desde una perspectiva epistemológica, la indagación sobre la conciencia cultural en la educación superior implica una exploración de cómo el conocimiento se construye y se transmite en un entorno multicultural. (Salas Hartemant *et al.* 2020). Este enfoque no solo amplía la comprensión de la epistemología en el ámbito educativo, sino que también destaca la importancia de la diversidad de perspectivas enriqueciendo la producción y transmisión del conocimiento.

En términos teleológicos, estudiar la conciencia cultural en la educación superior se alinea con el propósito fundamental de la formación académica: preparar a los estudiantes para contribuir de manera significativa a la sociedad. La habilidad de interactuar de manera efectiva en un mundo diverso se convierte en un objetivo clave, y el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural emerge como un medio estratégico para alcanzar este propósito, dotando a los graduados de herramientas esenciales para la participación activa y constructiva en contextos culturales diversos.

En este sentido, el objetivo de esta investigación busca examinar detalladamente las estrategias y programas existentes en diversas instituciones académicas para fomentar la conciencia cultural entre los estudiantes. La relevancia de esta indagación radica en su potencial para impactar positivamente en la formación de estudiantes, preparándolos para participar activamente en una sociedad diversa y global, y contribuyendo al fortalecimiento de las instituciones educativas como agentes de transformación social.

Metodología

Este estudio adoptó un enfoque mixto que integra elementos cuantitativos y cualitativos para proporcionar una comprensión holística del fomento de la conciencia cultural en el contexto de la educación superior en el estado de Sao Paulo. La investigación se orientó hacia un diseño exploratorio-explicativo, buscando explorar las prácticas actuales, evaluar su impacto y proponer estrategias pedagógicas, al tiempo que se esclarecen los factores explicativos de los resultados obtenidos.

La naturaleza exploratoria de esta investigación permitió un acercamiento inicial a la complejidad del fomento de la conciencia cultural en la educación superior. Posteriormente, el enfoque explicativo se centró en identificar relaciones causales y explicar la variabilidad observada en las prácticas y resultados.

Se implementó un diseño concurrente triangular, donde se recopilaron y analizaron datos cuantitativos y cualitativos de manera simultánea, permitiendo una triangulación de resultados que fortalece la validez y la comprensión integral del fenómeno estudiado.

La población de estudio estuvo conformada por 20 docentes de educación superior residentes en el estado de Sao Paulo. Este grupo fue seleccionado por su experiencia en el ámbito académico y su capacidad para proporcionar percepciones valiosas sobre el fomento de la conciencia cultural. La muestra consistió en 20 docentes seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional, garantizando la representatividad de diversas disciplinas académicas y experiencias en la integración de la conciencia cultural en sus prácticas pedagógicas.

Para la recopilación de datos cuantitativos, se administró una encuesta estructurada de tres partes, abordando prácticas actuales, impacto percibido y estrategias pedagógicas. La entrevista semiestructurada fue utilizada para recopilar datos cualitativos, profundizando en las experiencias, perspectivas y recomendaciones de los participantes. La encuesta consistió en un cuestionario con 30 ítems adaptados para recopilar datos cuantitativos, mientras que la guía de entrevista semiestructurada proporcionó un marco para la exploración detallada de las percepciones y experiencias cualitativas de los docentes.

Se obtuvo el consentimiento informado de todos los participantes, garantizando la confidencialidad y anonimato de la información recolectada. Se siguieron las directrices éticas establecidas por el Comité de Ética en Investigación. Los criterios de inclusión incluyeron la condición de ser docente de educación superior en el estado de Sao Paulo. No se aplicaron criterios de exclusión, permitiendo la participación de docentes de diversas disciplinas y enfoques pedagógicos. Una limitación potencial fue la representatividad geográfica limitada al estado de Sao Paulo, lo que podría afectar la generalización de los resultados a otras regiones. Además, la dependencia de la autodeclaración de los participantes podría introducir sesgos en la percepción de las prácticas y experiencias.

Resultados

Prácticas Actuales y Participación Docente

En este respecto los resultados proporcionaron información sobre los programas formales y diversas actividades implementadas, destacando la relevancia de estas iniciativas para un entorno educativo más inclusivo. El análisis cualitativo revela una percepción unánime sobre la importancia de los programas culturales. Además, se abordan las evaluaciones de efectividad y desafíos percibidos, así como la implicación del personal académico y las colaboraciones externas, resaltando la diversidad de experiencias y perspectivas que enriquecen la implementación de iniciativas culturales en el entorno educativo.

Programas formales y actividades implementadas

El 80% de los docentes participantes revela que sus instituciones cuentan con programas formales para fomentar la conciencia cultural. Además, en las entrevistas, varios docentes expresaron su entusiasmo por la diversidad de actividades implementadas, resaltando la importancia de estas iniciativas para construir un entorno educativo más inclusivo y enriquecedor.

En el análisis cualitativo de las respuestas obtenidas, se observa una convergencia en la percepción de la relevancia de los programas culturales en el ámbito educativo. Un participante destacó la conexión entre estos programas y la realidad del mundo, subrayando su carácter vital. Otro señaló que las actividades culturales agregan capas de conocimiento, comparándolas con un enriquecedor viaje en el aula. Asimismo, se resalta que la diversidad en las actividades permite descubrir talentos y tradiciones, enriqueciendo así las experiencias de aprendizaje. Un tercer participante enfatizó que la conciencia cultural es esencial para formar ciudadanos del mundo, no limitándose solo a desarrollar habilidades académicas. Por último, se subrayó que las iniciativas culturales generan un ambiente inclusivo que trasciende las aulas, representando un cambio positivo para el conjunto de la comunidad educativa. Este análisis cualitativo refleja la perspectiva unánime de los participantes respecto a la importancia y beneficios de los programas culturales en la educación.

Evaluación de la efectividad y desafíos percibidos

Aunque el 65% de los docentes considera efectivas las prácticas actuales, durante las entrevistas algunos expresaron la necesidad de una mayor evaluación de las necesidades cambiantes de los estudiantes. No obstante, en el análisis cualitativo de las entrevistas, se revela una perspectiva más matizada. Algunos participantes expresaron la necesidad de una evaluación más exhaustiva de las cambiantes necesidades de los estudiantes, subrayando la importancia de adaptar las estrategias educativas a la evolución de dichas necesidades.

Además, se evidenció una preocupación compartida entre algunos docentes respecto a la optimización de recursos financieros y humanos. En este sentido, se hizo hincapié en la importancia de una planificación estratégica que permita maximizar los recursos disponibles de manera eficiente. Estas voces cualitativas proporcionan una visión más completa y contextualizada de la percepción docente sobre la efectividad de las prácticas actuales, así como los desafíos que identifican en el entorno educativo, contribuyendo así a la comprensión más profunda de las dinámicas en juego.

Involucramiento del personal académico y colaboraciones externas

En relación con la participación activa del personal académico y colaboraciones externas, se destaca que el 70% de los docentes informa un activo compromiso en la integración de la conciencia cultural en el currículo. Las entrevistas cualitativas profundizaron en esta perspectiva, revelando que muchos docentes se involucran de manera voluntaria en estas iniciativas. Esta participación se fundamenta en el reconocimiento del valor que aportan las asociaciones externas para enriquecer la experiencia cultural de los estudiantes y fomentar un aprendizaje más significativo.

Las respuestas cualitativas de los participantes ofrecen una variedad de perspectivas sobre este involucramiento, subrayando la satisfacción derivada de contribuir a la integración cultural y ampliar las perspectivas de los estudiantes. Asimismo, se destaca la importancia de las colaboraciones externas como elementos clave para conectar la enseñanza con la realidad social de manera impactante. Además, se enfatiza que este compromiso activo es una elección personal que mejora la apreciación artística y literaria, enriquece las prácticas pedagógicas y contribuye a la formación de ciudadanos globalmente competentes. Este análisis cualitativo proporciona una comprensión más profunda de la dinámica y la motivación detrás del involucramiento del personal académico, destacando la diversidad de experiencias y perspectivas que enriquecen la implementación de iniciativas culturales en el entorno educativo.

Impacto en los docentes participantes

Los resultados revelan experiencias personales significativas, evidenciando cómo estas actividades influyen positivamente en las perspectivas individuales de los docentes. Entre los testimonios, se destaca la adaptación de enfoques pedagógicos, como la integración de aspectos culturales en lecciones y la diversificación de actividades físicas. Además, se explora la percepción de cambios en la dinámica cultural, destacando una mayor apertura y respeto en el entorno académico. Por lo tanto, es notoria la relevancia de la conciencia cultural en la preparación laboral y revelan cambios tangibles en la sensibilidad hacia la diversidad. Este análisis proporciona una comprensión profunda de cómo la participación activa en actividades culturales impacta positivamente en diversas dimensiones de la práctica educativa de los docentes, contribuyendo a un ambiente académico inclusivo y enriquecedor.

Participación en actividades y cambios percibidos

El 85% de los docentes participantes indica que han participado en actividades específicas de fomento de la conciencia cultural. Durante las entrevistas, algunos docentes compartieron experiencias personales, destacando cómo estas actividades influenciaron positivamente sus propias perspectivas, reforzando la importancia de la conciencia cultural en su desarrollo profesional y personal.

Durante las entrevistas cualitativas, los participantes compartieron experiencias personales reveladoras. Estos relatos subrayaron cómo la participación en estas actividades ha tenido un impacto positivo en sus perspectivas individuales, reforzando la importancia de la conciencia cultural en su desarrollo profesional y personal. Entre las respuestas cualitativas destacadas, se encuentra el testimonio de un docente de ciencias, quien señaló que la participación lo hizo más consciente de la diversidad, integrando ahora enfoques culturales en sus lecciones. Otro participante, profesor de historia, resaltó cómo las actividades transformaron su enseñanza, presentando la historia desde perspectivas más diversas y enriquecedoras.

Una maestra de música compartió cómo la exploración de tradiciones musicales amplió su repertorio y mejoró la conexión con sus alumnos. Asimismo, un profesor de educación física señaló que las actividades lo inspiraron a diversificar las actividades físicas, incorporando juegos tradicionales de diversas culturas. Por último, una docente de lengua afirmó que la participación en estas iniciativas cambió su enfoque, fomentando ahora la apreciación de la diversidad lingüística en sus estudiantes. Este análisis cualitativo revela la riqueza de las experiencias individuales de los docentes, resaltando cómo la participación activa en actividades culturales impacta positivamente en diversas dimensiones de su práctica educativa.

Cambios en la dinámica cultural y relevancia laboral

En cuanto a la percepción de cambios en la dinámica cultural, se destaca que, aunque el 55% de los docentes universitarios participantes observa alteraciones, las entrevistas proporcionaron una comprensión más profunda de dichos cambios. Al profundizar en estas experiencias, algunos docentes destacaron un aumento en la apertura y respeto hacia diversas perspectivas en el entorno académico. Se manifestó que esta evolución se refleja en una mayor disposición de los estudiantes para explorar y discutir diferentes puntos de vista, evidenciando una transformación en la dinámica de las interacciones académicas. Además, la mayoría de los

docentes coincidió en la esencialidad de la conciencia cultural para la preparación de los estudiantes en un mundo laboral cada vez más globalizado.

Las respuestas cualitativas de los docentes universitarios añadieron matices a esta perspectiva, resaltando cambios tangibles en la sensibilidad hacia la diversidad, la incorporación de perspectivas globales en la enseñanza de temas específicos, y el enriquecimiento de las interpretaciones literarias con una apreciación más profunda de la diversidad de voces. Asimismo, se subrayó la relevancia de la conciencia cultural para desarrollar habilidades interculturales, particularmente en áreas como la tecnología, y se observó una mayor tolerancia lingüística entre los estudiantes, quienes valoran la diversidad de expresiones lingüísticas en el entorno académico. Este análisis cualitativo ofrece una visión comprehensiva de los cambios percibidos y la importancia atribuida a la conciencia cultural en el ámbito universitario, enriqueciendo la comprensión de las dinámicas culturales en la educación superior.

Contribución a un ambiente académico inclusivo

En relación con la contribución a un ambiente académico inclusivo, destaca que el 90% de los docentes universitarios participantes percibe que la conciencia cultural desempeña un papel fundamental en la creación de un entorno académico más inclusivo y enriquecedor. Las entrevistas cualitativas profundizaron en esta percepción, revelando que la integración de la conciencia cultural ha generado un ambiente más abierto y colaborativo.

Los docentes compartieron experiencias que ilustran cómo esta integración fomenta un diálogo enriquecedor, donde los estudiantes se sienten parte de una comunidad diversa. Entre las respuestas cualitativas, se destaca la observación de un aumento en la empatía entre los estudiantes, sugiriendo que la conciencia cultural contribuye a un entendimiento más profundo y a una participación más activa. Además, se señaló que la diversidad en proyectos grupales ha mejorado, permitiendo que los estudiantes aporten perspectivas únicas que enriquecen el aprendizaje colectivo. También se resaltó cómo la conciencia cultural crea un espacio donde las diversas expresiones lingüísticas son valoradas, creando un ambiente en el cual todos se sienten bienvenidos y comprendidos. Este análisis cualitativo ofrece una visión integral de cómo la conciencia cultural, según la percepción de los docentes universitarios, no solo contribuye a la diversidad en el aula, sino que también juega un papel crucial en la construcción de un ambiente académico inclusivo, fomentando la participación, el diálogo enriquecedor y el respeto por las diversas perspectivas.

Estrategias pedagógicas y percepciones docentes

Los datos revelan experiencias personales significativas, evidenciando cómo estas actividades influyen positivamente en las perspectivas individuales de los docentes. Entre los testimonios, se destaca la adaptación de enfoques pedagógicos, como la integración de aspectos culturales en lecciones y la diversificación de actividades físicas. Además, se aproxima a la percepción de cambios en la dinámica cultural, destacando una mayor apertura y respeto en el entorno académico. Estos datos subrayan la relevancia de la conciencia cultural en la preparación laboral y revelan cambios tangibles en la sensibilidad hacia la diversidad. Por lo tanto, este análisis proporciona una comprensión profunda de cómo la participación activa en actividades culturales impacta positivamente en diversas dimensiones de la práctica educativa de los docentes, contribuyendo a un ambiente académico inclusivo y enriquecedor.

Integración obligatoria y barreras percibidas

En relación con la integración obligatoria y las barreras percibidas, se destaca que el 60% de los docentes universitarios participantes considera que la conciencia cultural debería ser obligatoria en el plan de estudios. Las entrevistas cualitativas proporcionaron una perspectiva más rica sobre esta opinión, revelando el apoyo de algunos docentes a esta idea, resaltando la posibilidad de que la obligatoriedad fomente una participación más amplia y comprometida. Estos participantes destacaron la importancia de asegurar que todos los estudiantes se beneficien y se preparen para un mundo diverso. No obstante, también se mencionó la resistencia al cambio como una barrera a superar.

En este contexto, se subrayó que la resistencia es un fenómeno natural, pero la obligatoriedad podría ser clave para superar la inercia y generar conciencia. Además, se enfatizó que la obligatoriedad garantizaría la equidad en la exposición a diversas perspectivas, considerándola crucial para una formación académica completa. Los participantes también resaltaron que la participación más amplia podría romper barreras, haciendo hincapié en que la conciencia cultural debería ser considerada como una competencia fundamental. En última instancia, se reconoció que, aunque la resistencia representa un desafío, la obligatoriedad podría ser un impulsor para la aceptación y comprensión de la diversidad, incluso en disciplinas que tradicionalmente han enfrentado mayores barreras a esta integración. Este análisis cualitativo proporciona una visión integral de las percepciones y posturas de los docentes universitarios sobre la integración obligatoria de la conciencia cultural, destacando las oportunidades y desafíos asociados a esta propuesta en el contexto académico.

Formación continua y adaptación a disciplinas específicas

En cuanto a la formación continua y la adaptación a disciplinas específicas, se destaca que el 70% de los docentes universitarios participantes respalda la idea de que la formación continua en conciencia cultural sea obligatoria para el personal académico. Las entrevistas cualitativas proporcionaron una comprensión más detallada de esta perspectiva, revelando que los docentes reconocen la importancia de mantenerse actualizados y adaptar sus enfoques pedagógicos a las cambiantes dinámicas culturales. Los participantes enfatizaron que la adaptación a las características específicas de cada disciplina es esencial para una integración efectiva de la conciencia cultural en la enseñanza superior.

Entre las respuestas cualitativas, se resaltó que la formación continua es clave para comprender las dinámicas culturales en evolución, impactando directamente en la capacidad para guiar a los estudiantes. Además, se subrayó que adaptar enfoques es esencial en ciencias aplicadas, donde la formación continua garantiza la integración relevante de la conciencia cultural. Se argumentó que la obligatoriedad de esta formación aseguraría que todos los docentes estén equipados para abordar la diversidad en el aula, independientemente de la disciplina. También se destacó que la formación continua debería ser específica para cada área, permitiendo abordar cuestiones culturales pertinentes a cada disciplina de manera más efectiva. En el ámbito de las humanidades, se afirmó que la formación continua es esencial para interpretar la diversidad cultural de manera auténtica y significativa. Este análisis cualitativo refleja la diversidad de perspectivas de los docentes universitarios sobre la necesidad de formación continua y la adaptación a disciplinas específicas en el contexto de la conciencia cultural, ofreciendo una visión integral de los desafíos y oportunidades asociados con esta propuesta.

Uso de tecnología y participación estudiantil

En relación con el uso de tecnología y la participación estudiantil, destaca que el 75% de los docentes universitarios participantes sugiere que la tecnología podría fortalecer la conciencia cultural en el proceso educativo. Las entrevistas cualitativas proporcionaron una visión más detallada de esta perspectiva, reflejando la percepción de los docentes sobre la utilidad de herramientas tecnológicas para diversificar el aprendizaje y fomentar la interacción intercultural.

Entre las respuestas cualitativas, se destacó que la tecnología facilita el acceso a diversas perspectivas, permitiendo que los estudiantes exploren y comprendan mejor la diversidad cultural. Además, se resaltó el potencial de las herramientas tecnológicas para crear experiencias inmersivas, como la realidad virtual, que puede transportar a los estudiantes a entornos culturales diferentes. Se subrayó la importancia de la participación activa de los estudiantes como clave para el éxito de estas iniciativas, especialmente en el contexto de plataformas digitales que pueden potenciar el intercambio lingüístico y ampliar las discusiones literarias. Se enfatizó que la participación estudiantil es fundamental para maximizar el potencial de estas herramientas y que, en proyectos interdisciplinarios, la tecnología puede enriquecer la resolución de problemas al incorporar perspectivas culturales de manera más eficaz. Este análisis cualitativo refleja la convergencia de opiniones de los docentes universitarios sobre el papel positivo que la tecnología puede desempeñar en la promoción de la conciencia cultural y la importancia de la participación activa de los estudiantes para maximizar estos recursos en el contexto educativo superior.

Los resultados resaltan el compromiso activo y entusiasta de los docentes participantes en las prácticas de fomento de la conciencia cultural. Las entrevistas proporcionaron una perspectiva cualitativa valiosa, destacando experiencias personales, desafíos y sugerencias concretas para mejorar la integración de la conciencia cultural en el ámbito de la educación superior. Estos hallazgos respaldan la importancia de continuar fortaleciendo y adaptando estrategias pedagógicas en colaboración con los docentes para garantizar un impacto positivo y sostenible.

Conclusiones

El presente estudio ha explorado a fondo la promoción de la conciencia cultural en el ámbito de la educación superior, analizando prácticas actuales, participación docente, evaluación de efectividad, desafíos percibidos, involucramiento del personal académico, colaboraciones externas, impacto en los docentes participantes, participación en actividades y cambios percibidos, cambios en la dinámica cultural, contribución a un ambiente académico inclusivo, estrategias pedagógicas, integración obligatoria, formación continua, uso de tecnología y participación estudiantil.

Los resultados revelan una clara convergencia en la percepción de la importancia de los programas culturales en el ámbito educativo, con un énfasis unánime en su relevancia para construir un entorno educativo más inclusivo y enriquecedor. La evaluación de la efectividad muestra una perspectiva matizada, con algunos docentes expresando la necesidad de una mayor adaptabilidad a las cambiantes necesidades de los estudiantes y la optimización de recursos financieros y humanos. El involucramiento activo del personal académico y las colaboraciones externas se destacan como elementos clave para conectar la enseñanza con la realidad social de manera impactante.

La participación en actividades culturales ha generado cambios significativos en la práctica educativa de los docentes, desde la adaptación de enfoques pedagógicos hasta la percepción de una mayor apertura y respeto en el entorno académico. Estos cambios se reflejan en la dinámica cultural, donde se observa una mayor disposición de los estudiantes para explorar y discutir diferentes perspectivas, evidenciando una transformación en las interacciones académicas.

La contribución a un ambiente académico inclusivo es evidente, con la mayoría de los docentes percibiendo que la conciencia cultural desempeña un papel fundamental en la creación de un entorno más abierto y colaborativo. La integración obligatoria de la conciencia cultural en el plan de estudios es respaldada por un considerable porcentaje de docentes, a pesar de la resistencia percibida como una barrera.

La formación continua en conciencia cultural es respaldada por la mayoría de los docentes, reconociendo la importancia de adaptarse a las dinámicas culturales cambiantes y la necesidad de enfoques específicos para cada disciplina. La tecnología se percibe como una herramienta valiosa para fortalecer la conciencia cultural, con la participación activa de los estudiantes como un factor crucial para maximizar su potencial.

De modo que, este estudio demuestra que la promoción de la conciencia cultural en la educación superior no solo es relevante, sino que también tiene un impacto positivo en la práctica educativa, la dinámica cultural y la construcción de un ambiente académico inclusivo. Las conclusiones derivadas de este trabajo proporcionan una base sólida para futuras investigaciones y la continua mejora de estrategias pedagógicas en colaboración con los docentes, asegurando así un avance significativo en el campo de estudio.

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