Processes of Teaching-Learning English as a Foreign Language

Trends and Challenges in Mexico

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Universidad de Guadalajara

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Índice

Introduction

Teaching today must be understood as a process that influences and is influenced by personal, social, and cultural aspects. Thus, quality in the teaching-learning process consists of reinforcing the commitment between the social and educational contexts (Fernández Batanero, 2004). In the specific case of teaching English as a foreign language in Mexico, Rueda & Wilburn (2015) argue that it is necessary even from the third grade of preschool. This need has led to the *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica* (National Program for English in Basic Education [PNIEB]) (SEP, 2009) to being part of the curriculum development area for more than a decade now. The primary goal of this program is for the learner to carry out pragmatic, cultural, and sociolinguistic practices that satisfy communicative needs and create an awareness of *otherness*. Certainly, the fact of living in a globalized world promotes internationalization in the fields of education, economy, medicine, technology, etc. Therefore, the teaching of English in Mexico seeks to develop individuals capable of carrying out the aforementioned practices and to develop this awareness of the existence of other languages and cultures.

Consequently, the following questions arise: What are the teaching-learning processes of English as a foreign language in Mexico? What are the current trends in these processes? How do teachers and students of English as a foreign language face the different challenges that concern our current society? What do these challenges consist of? This book *Processes of Teaching-Learning English as a Foreign Language: Trends and Challenges in Mexico* seeks to answer the aforementioned questions through eight engaging chapters that deal with a variety of phenomena related to the practices and processes of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

The first chapter of the book *Gamification and English Language Teaching: An Experience in the Mexican Context* has been written by José Manuel Hernández Rodríguez and Josefina Santana Villegas. The authors describe a gamification experience that took place in a Mexican English-language classroom. To present their results Hernández Rodríguez and Santana Villegas used quantitative methods in order to determine the impact of gamification on university students. Furthermore, they used qualitative data to explore if gamification could increase student motivation.

Raising Students' Awareness of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity of English Language Through Classroom Exposure is the second chapter of this book. In it, the authors, Ana Valeria Dávila Villavicencio and Verónica Pimienta Rosales, conducted a study to explore students' attitudes towards nine varieties of English before and after the implementation of awareness-raising activities of World Englishes. The scenario for this research was a public high school in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

The third chapter was written by Estefany Justo Hernández and the title is *Fallos pragmáticos en rechazos producidos por aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera* (Pragmatic failures in refusals produced by learners of English as a foreign language). Justo Hernández aims to identify the type of pragmatic failures that students commit when refusing. The chapter describes how students adapt their refusals according to contextual variables such as: social power, social distance, and intensity of the speech act. The author used online questionnaires that were distributed to Mexican adolescent students of English at B1 level.

Marcelino Del Alto Álvarez is the author of the fourth chapter, *Pragmatic Competence in Social Contexts*. In his chapter, Del Alto Álvarez explains how pragmatic competence plays an important role in improving learners' communication abilities in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, the author describes the challenges students usually face when they communicate in social contexts and the particular pragmatic skills they use in order to apologize appropriately.

The fifth chapter, *Students' Opinions on the Use of Glossaries and Learning Techniques for Vocabulary Development*, was written by Beatriz Ramírez Figueroa and Sara Quintero Ramírez. In their text, the authors describe the process and the results of a proposal that focused on vocabulary learning techniques and the creation of a glossary. The proposal took place in a group of volunteer English language learners of different BA programs of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa.

Desarrollo y desempeño del alumno con síndrome de Asperger en el aprendizaje del inglés dentro del salón de clase promedio (Development and performance of the student with Asperger Syndrome in learning English in the everyday classroom) is the title of the sixth chapter which was written by Mario Márquez Farias and Angélica Sandoval Pineda. The text describes the situation of three students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and their process of learning English as a foreign language in an everyday classroom. The authors kept records on the three subjects' performance in the classroom and analyzed how this performance influenced their learning, the teachers' teaching, and the behavior of the whole class.

The authors of *Gender Visibility in an ELT Textbook used at a Public University in the State of Michoacán*, the seventh chapter, are Lidia Daniela Coronel Merino and Margarita Ramos Godínez. In their text, the authors analyze one particular textbook that is used at the largest public University in the state of Michoacán. Coronel Merino and Ramos Godínez examine the textbook in terms of Critical Pedagogics, Gender Visibility, and Gender Discourse through content analysis.

The last chapter, *Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation, and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused on the Board Game Strategy*, was written by Karen Andrea García Bobadilla. The author proposed a board game which focused on the phonological concepts of articulation, pronunciation, and intelligibility of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless postalveolar fricative / ʃ/. In her proposal, García Bobadilla combined three modes of practice: a) imitative speaking practice, b) rehearsed speaking practice, and c) extemporaneous speech practice.

In conclusion, this book is aimed primarily at teachers of English (or other languages) in the Mexican context, both in training and practicing. The publication aims to raise awareness of the trends and challenges that teachers and learners of English as a foreign language face in the different academic scenarios in Mexico. It is also expected to be a scientific and up-to-date publication, which will serve to strengthen the professionalization of the foreign language teaching profession.

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Gamification and English Language Teaching: An Experience in the Mexican Context

José Manuel Hernández Rodríguez
Josefina C. Santana

Abstract

In recent years, gamification –the use of gaming elements in non-gaming contexts– has become increasingly important in different aspects of human life, including education in general, and language teaching and learning in particular. Despite the growing interest, research has still to establish what gamification is and is not and how useful it can be in educational contexts. There is overlap with similar concepts, such as game-based learning, serious games, and learning by design. This chapter will clarify the differences among the different gaming concepts and describe the elements that are needed to gamify a course. It will discuss the state of the art of gamification in English language learning around the world and in Mexico. Finally, it will describe a gamification research that took place in a Mexican university language classroom. The study used quantitative methods to explore the impact of gamification on student grades, and qualitative data to explore if gamification could increase student motivation. Results were positive and statistically significant.

Keywords: *Engagement, English Language Learning, Gamification, Motivation*.

Introduction

The search for ways to motivate language learners is seemingly never-ending. Among the newer approaches to increase student motivation and engagement, and thus, academic outcomes, gamification has received increasing attention over the past decade (Hung, 2017).

Though playing games in the language classroom is certainly not new, gamification goes beyond mere play. It was defined by Deterding et al. (2011, p. 10) as "the use of game design in non-game contexts". Gamification changes individual behaviors or attitudes by making the desired outcomes fun (Matallaoui et al., 2017) and it has been used in a variety of different fields, including software adoption, resource planning, logistics, weight loss, business, training, and education.

This paper will describe different types of game-based learning. Afterwards, it will explain the elements that constitute a gamified approach. Finally, it will describe a study into gamification in a language course at a Mexican university. The objective of the study was to explore the impact of gamification on student outcomes and student motivation. The research questions were

- What is the impact of gamified instruction on student scores on a TOEIC test?
- What is the impact of gamified instruction on student motivation and engagement in a high intermediate level English language course?

Theoretical framework

Researchers into game-based learning distinguish between the broader category of play, and the narrower concept of game (Deterding et al., 2011; Matallaoui et al., 2017). They posit that play is rule free, while games are more regulated, with clearly defined goals and explicitly stated rules (Matallaoui et al., 2017). Thus, classroom games should include these two elements, as well as continuous and prompt feedback, some way for participants to measure their progress, a system of rewards, and the chance to collaborate with other players and/or to challenge them (Deterding et al., 2011; Hung, 2017; Mattalaoui et al., 2017). These elements are based on common human desires for reward, status, competition, achievement, altruism and self-expression (Hung, 2017).

The concept of gamification has been confused with simply playing games in the classroom. One of the principal differences between these two approaches is that games tend to be standalone elements within a class. They are used to motivate students, to add an element of fun to a class, as a time-filler, or an icebreaker. Gamification, on the other hand, is not limited to one class, but is usually spread out throughout the course, with different parts of the game being accomplished in several classes.

Likewise, gamification has been confused with other educational approaches such as game-based learning, which focuses on playing educational or commercial games as a means to practice certain skills (Hung, 2017; Mattallaoui et al., 2017; Nicholson, 2015). Serious games are another use of play in the classroom; these games tend to focus on changing behaviors, for example, avoiding addiction or improving health (Deterding et al., 2011; Sanford et al., 2015). Another concept –learning by design– has students designing their own games to understand complex issues or develop systems thinking (Hung, 2017).

Gamification concentrates on game mechanics, especially through the use of a guiding narrative around which individual tasks or activities revolve (Deterding et al., 2011; Hung, 2017; Nicholson, 2015). Some of these tasks should require students to work individually and challenge other players, while other tasks should promote collaboration among students (Nicholson, 2015), with participants having the possibility to choose what they want to work on and how they will do it (Hung, 2017). This type of flexibility is crucial to retain the element of fun inherent in gamification (Nicholson, 2015). If students are obligated to do certain tasks in specific ways to accomplish established goals, the activities become a requirement and not a game.

Nicholson (2015) proposes a "recipe" for gamification, which includes play, exposition, choice, information, engagement, and reflection. Exposition revolves around stories, which should be engaging and give structure to the activities but reflect real-world situations. A fantasy world may be engaging, but it will be distracting if there is no opportunity to apply the learning to the real world. Information refers to explaining to the students how and why they are learning something. They should understand that the purpose of an activity is always learning, and not merely earning points. Engagement includes collaboration and upping the challenge to avoid boredom. Finally, reflection time gives students a chance to step back and try to connect what they learned through the game to their lives. Nicholson (2015) recommends that students talk about feelings first, then what happened in the activities, then, what they learned, and lastly, what they take away from the experience.

Critics of gamification state that the focus of the class often becomes the rewards system (Hung, 2017), though Nicholson (2015) points out that if the tasks are well-designed and engaging, students will do them for fun, rather than for the reward. He goes on to say "Play and have fun: Gamification should be about having fun, not just for the students but for the instructor too. If neither party is having fun, then gamification serves no purpose" (p. 69). Other critiques are that gamification requires a lot of time and effort on the part of the instructor (Hung, 2017; Iosup & Epema, 2014) and that not everyone finds it equally enjoyable (Nicholson, 2015).

It must also be noted that studies have shown that gamified classes have a positive effect on student motivation and attendance, but the impact on student grades is not clear (Hung, 2017). The following section will provide an overview of research into gamification in educational contexts.

Literature Review

Gamification in Education

The perceived effectiveness of gamification in education is often challenged by detractors. A study by Rabah et al. (2018) focused on analyzing the impact gamification has had in education by going through a second-order review; in this qualitative study, the authors went through five years of gamification literature review, spanning from 2014 to 2018. In their findings, Rabah et al. (2018) elucidate on several different aspects that serve as underpinning concepts within gamification in education and serve to delimit its impact and effectiveness. The first aspect observed was the outcomes being used to decide effectiveness, which encompass the cognitive learning outcomes and the positive effects it may have on motivation, emotion, engagement, and behavior, as well as their relationship with one another. The second aspect observed was the game design elements used to decide effectiveness, which were mentioned as somewhat reduced in nature;

to observe their true effectiveness, "the design principles and mechanics of both gamification and learning must be considered together" (Rabah et al., 2018).

For their conclusions, Rabah et al. (2018) consider that researchers could improve the lens through which we observe gamification in education by working towards an intertwined relationship between concepts of education and game design. This can in turn aid research by providing clearer contextual variables and would allow for the creation of stronger predictive models that integrate the previously mentioned conceptual relationship of game design and education.

Erenli (2013) posits a particular challenge for gamification, stemming from issues related to the educator, through the following question: "Is it possible to develop a game framework for educational purposes which can be customized by educators for individual use?"

Erenli's (2013) question arises from the need to put gamification in the hands of educators who are not versed in game design or creation of game design elements. From a series of questions going in-depth into these aspects, the idea of creating a gamified tour of the university where the research was being conducted came to be. A final series of criteria created their project, known as QuizeRo: a "cheap, non-to-code, easy-to-use-and-adapt game for students" (Erenli, 2013).

As Erenli (2013) expounds, the design of QuizeRo was built upon these criteria, as well as the technical level of students and the games through which students would interact with the platform. These games would essentially be virtually enhanced scavenger hunts where the students would wander around the city, learning more about its history through different points of interest integrated into Google Maps and through the use of QR codes.

Results of this study were promising, and the feedback received from the course helped them identify several key guidelines to improving the game, such as the use of storytelling, effective path-finding, and pre-testing of the project before deploying it to a particular group of students. The study concludes by presenting a positive response to the initial problematic, as the results showed the potential of the game's adaptability, but also recommends that the educator approach an experienced professional regarding game design, so they can create stories and game elements with the best possible engagement.

Another practical observation was conducted by Smith and Baker (2011); in it, two games were created to guide students around their library's services. The primary objective was to elucidate and engage with students through novel means, thereby allowing better workflow in the library.

Get a Clue, the first game, revolved around the physical library and its services, working as an immersive experience where students attempted to solve a mystery. This was done through finding clues scattered throughout the library, as well as on-site staff to guide them through it. In contrast, the second game, LibraryCraft, was designed to help students understand how to utilize the library's website; the purpose was framed as a quest to find and slay a dragon through on-site tools and quests (Smith & Baker, 2011).

The results of Smith and Baker's (2011) study presented both games in a positive light. For Get a Clue, 90% of the 338 students surveyed reported having greatly improved navigation of the library and its facilities; for LibraryCraft, 84.5% of the 52 students surveyed agreed they had learned a new library-related skill in their experience, and 87% would recommend the experience to newly arrived students. With a combination of prizes and increased campaigning, further runs of the games proved to be very successful among students at the university.

There have also been studies that show the misconceptions of gamification. Moncada and Moncada (2014) observe gamification from the point of view of accounting education; specifically, how it can be applied within that context. For this, they present a series of characteristics that support well-designed gamification activities for education, such as the use of educational objectives, providing clear and concise instructions, simple, easy-to-understand rules, and accurate, relevant content, as well as engagement through feedback and interactivity.

The study presents five different gamified projects that can be used in accounting education through the use of PowerPoint presentation delivery: adaptations of Hollywood Squares, Connect 4, and three sample games working with board games integrated into presentations. Though it concludes on a hopeful note, where the tools provided in it could help out accounting education improve student engagement and motivation, it should be noted that the study appears to have a misconception regarding what gamification is and equates it more with game-based learning (Moncada & Moncada, 2014).

Studies working through the pitfalls that gamification present in education also exist. A study by Laskowski and Badurowicz (2014) is framed within the use of gamification in universities, with the goal of motivating and engaging students as well as possible. The study involved 62 students in their first year of master's studies in Computer Science, for which the researchers applied a gamified course. The decision to choose this particular group was due to their unfamiliarity with one another, as well as their previous academic experience. The students were divided into four groups, two of which served as control groups and the other two as treatment groups. The gamified course used points, badges, and leaderboards to measure their success within it, as well as bonuses for finding particular solutions or problems within the course (Laskowski & Badurowicz, 2014). Results of this study showed that gamified groups had an increased attendance value, greater homework completion, but a noticeably lower average grade.

Laskowski and Badurowicz (2014) conclude that gamification may have a positive impact in the classroom, but there were inconclusive results regarding the grades between both the control and treatment groups. They suggest further studies to find out what may cause this difference in grades.

Contextualizing gamification as part of the classroom instead of the whole, Mahmud et al. (2020) sought to observe the effectiveness of online gamification and the teacher's online presence in a course related to sustainability education. The study is framed within the ever-increasing use of technology in modern classrooms and was both quasi-experimental and mixed in nature. The students worked in a gamified sustainability platform called JouleBug, which incentivizes students for environmentally friendly actions through the use of points and badges. Quantitative results showed significant differences between the treatment and control group's points and domain of sustainability knowledge as well as pro-environmental behavior. Qualitative findings showed that there were three primary drivers for performing the activities in JouleBug: recognition by the teacher and peers; competition; and the sense of belonging to a group. Barriers to performing the activities in JouleBug were time constraints and boredom. The authors conclude that, for gamification to work with online learners, the game itself is not the key; findings suggest that teaching presence is an important building block to develop a social connection and cognitive presence within an online learning environment (Mahmud et al., 2020).

Observing gamification from a point of view of the early learner, Hursen and Bas (2019) focus on a mixed-method study that applied gamification on a group of 16 fourth grade elementary students as well as their parents. As mentioned by other studies in this chapter, one of the more poignant issues in the field of contemporary education is the lack of motivation in students and the lack of a means to truly engage with ever-changing generations immersed in technology. Gamification can be seen as a means to improve and engage with a student's motivation, and research into science education about the topic is sparse (Hursen & Bas, 2019). Hursen and Bas (2019) apply two tools for this mixed method study. First, the "motivation scale for learning science", which was used to gauge interest in students about science education. Second, an interview form was applied which served to measure students' and their parents' opinions of their work throughout the gamified course, which was presented through the ClassDojo application. Results of the interviews showed that the majority (15 out of 16) of the students were satisfied with the experience; this also correlated with the results of the motivation survey, where students showed willingness to approach science education, and increased motivation to do research after the course. Parents also had a positive reception to the use of gamification in the classroom, noting that their children showed an increased enthusiasm and had fun during their classes.

For their conclusion, Hursen and Bas (2019) suggest that gamification applications should be used at other levels and courses of elementary education, and that studies should be conducted to observe their effectiveness, as their results showed a positive response and increase in motivation on the students' part.

The pursuit of motivation in students of all levels has been seen throughout these studies, and Iosup and Epema's (2014) study stems from a similar viewpoint: the lack of motivation apparent in European technical higher education, noting a steadily decreasing lower enrolment and graduation rate.

This study was a qualitative empirical multi-year evaluation conducted on two gamification courses at GamificationU, a university in the Netherlands. The data were collected from 450 students over four course sessions, through both analysis of their course performance and surveys. Results in course performance showed that the gamified courses had a 75% completion rate in comparison to 65% in previous years of non-gamified courses. The authors correlate this with increased student satisfaction, which may be due to the use of gamification; of the students surveyed 57.3% "learned much from the course" and 50% "found the content of the course interesting".

Gamification in English Language Teaching (ELT)

There have also been several studies conducted that attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of gamification in the context of teaching English, either as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). The following are some of the more recent studies pertaining to this context.

A study by Redjeki and Muhajir's (2021) discusses the use of the gamified platform Duolingo in university students going through their second semester. As with other studies mentioned in this chapter, motivation and engagement are key issues for the authors.

They worked with an action research methodology, with the design consisting of both quantitative and qualitative components: surveys, observations, questionnaires, and documentations. This was done to analyze 15 students going through the subject "Grammar for Written Discourse". This study was conducted over the course of four days, during which the students worked on the gamified platform on their own. Results showed positive reception to the gamified platform, with students stating that the platform was easy to use, piqued their interest in learning, and could be used at any time (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2021).

Another contemporary study by Fithriani (2021) involved two classes comprising 74 first year students taking a general English course, selected through convenience cluster sampling. These participants and their two groups were randomly selected as the control and treatment groups. The findings suggest that the treatment group outperformed the control group, as well as reported increased learning outcomes, enjoyment, and motivation by using the gamified platform.

There are also contemporary studies that work with contexts that are seldom observed in gamification literature. A study from Abusa'aleek and Baniabdelrahman (2020) describes issues related to Jordanian students' reading comprehension, which the authors claim was not at a satisfactory level at the time. The study followed a quasi-experimental design, with a treatment group and a control group. The authors present the independent variable as competing strategies: gamification and conventional instruction. The dependent variable was the reading comprehension post-test presented to students; specifically, their performance in said test. The findings showed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, with the experimental group outperforming the control group in the three levels of reading comprehension. The authors suggest several reasons for these results: the improved planning in the content of the gamified reading activities, the nature of gamification itself, and the variance of the gamified activities in comparison to those in the regular program; therefore, they conclude that gamification does have a positive impact, which is consistent with findings from other authors mentioned in this chapter (Abusa'aleek & Baniabdelrahman, 2020).

In a study describing regional perspectives regarding gamification, Phuong (2020) used a mixed method research design to analyze the views of 147 students in the final period of an English preparation course (EPC) in a private university. Results of surveys and focus groups showed that the students primarily received gamified assistance in their classes for their vocabulary (85% in the surveys); additionally, students showed a generally positive view towards online language game environments, with 57% indicating a positive view. The focus group also yielded similar results, with online games being associated with "fun", considered "interesting, relaxing, great". They also noted that the use of leaderboards was a significant factor in motivating them to continue learning; however, it is also noted as a detriment to motivation, with some students noting that their low scores put them off from participating further (Phuong, 2020).

Another study by Ahmed et al. (2022) followed a mixed method, with the use of pre-test, post-test and attitude questionnaires as quantitative methods, and the use of interviews as qualitative methods. The participants of the study consisted of 50 upper intermediate EFL students in an Iranian English institution. Results showed that the treatment group performed better than the control group in the post-test, with a significant difference. Interviews showed that "enjoyment" and "fun" were the main factors regarding positive interactions with gamification, going so far as to say that they perceived reduced learning anxiety while learning through a gamified platform; additionally, they also mentioned an increased involvement in their learning.

Finally, a study by Fernández-Portero and Castillo-Rodríguez (2022) was concerned with the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding the use of breakout rooms, a form of gamified learning, in an English language class. For their study, the authors applied a mixed-method research design, with a survey designed to elicit feedback from the participants regarding a digital breakout applied to them as a means to observe academic performance and motivation to learn EFL. The participants for this study were 113 undergraduate students from two different academic years. The breakout rooms consisted of five different challenges which were carried out in four game-based learning platforms, as well as three Google Form quizzes used to maintain the flow between challenges. For the results, the attitudes presented by the pre-service teachers were mostly positive, reflecting enjoyment and motivation, as well as eagerness to apply these sorts of activities in the future. There was however a consideration for the use of rewards, as some participants considered the exercise to be null without extrinsic motivation.

Gamification in the Mexican ELT context

Having looked at the world-wide perspectives and applications of gamification, we move into the contexts of Mexico and English language teaching. The following studies present observations regarding them and gamification (Mora & Camacho, 2019; Reyes Cabrera & Quiñonez Pech, 2018; Chiñas Palacios et al., 2019).

We start with a study by Mora Márquez and Camacho Torralbo (2019), whose paper presents a proposal to use Classcraft within the EFL context of an elementary school group. The authors present a detailed proposal with the purpose of easing students into the acquisition of basic grammatical concepts of the English language, such as the present tenses and irregular verbs. This proposal is divided into three phases, which are meant to aid students by streamlining and facilitating the experience for them. Throughout the proposed course timeframe (three months), students would be undertaking four different tasks within Classcraft, each with different purposes but all revolving around understanding the aforementioned grammatical concepts.

Looking at the distance education context within the country and gamification, Reyes Cabrera and Quiñonez Pech (2018) analyze the potential impact gamification could have on this educational model in Mexico, particularly on the higher education institutions that are part of it. They observe that, while there exists a relatively low percentage of the population with a computer in their homes (46%), there is a vast majority that has a smart device (phone or tablet) with internet access (87%), something that could be used to the advantage of educational institutions.

Of note, however, is that they mention there is a clear lack of knowledge regarding gamification or any game-based learning methodologies by said institutions, who focus exclusively on either acquiring equipment, or instructing professors on the use of the former (Reyes Cabrera & Quiñonez Pech, 2018). Other challenges presented by the authors include the increasing academic bureaucracy within institutions, which leads to a lack of time for teachers to create meaningful lessons; and the difficulty of avoiding ethical pitfalls and psychological exploitation.

Still, the authors are hopeful in the possible implementation of gamification in higher education, as they consider the technology ripe for potential, but would require the initiative from the institutions to consider its use and to concern itself with the creation of true virtual learning environments (Reyes Cabrera & Quiñonez Pech, 2018). Though this paper only analyzes the use of gamification through the digital landscape, their observations highlight one of the possible avenues it can be implemented within the Mexican educational system, particularly in higher education.

Following the use of gamification in higher education within Mexico, Chinas Palacios et al. (2019) focus on the evaluation design of a questionnaire for the final test in a subject of an Energy Engineering course in the central region of the country. To do this, the authors created a questionnaire based on Bloom's revised taxonomy of thinking skills, creating a set of thirteen questions that followed the taxonomy's flow (Remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating). This questionnaire was created within the Kahoot! platform and, along with the unmodified questionnaire, was applied to students of the course. Results showed that the test designed with the taxonomy in mind showed a significantly higher effectiveness than the one without (90.60% of correct answers vs. 60.68%).

Chinas Palacios et al. (2019) share a similar sentiment to Reyes Cabrera and Quiñonez Pech (2018), in that the educational institutions of the country are not comfortable with the change that has been occurring to education in the digital age. This practical application of gamification to a particular context of the class (a final exam) and its refinement towards a better evaluation tool for students is a contemporary example of how there are avenues of benefit for the implementation of gamification in an ever-increasing digital environment.

Summarizing the studies on gamification in education in general, and in language learning in particular, the approach seems to be especially used to explore motivation and engagement in the classroom, and in this sense, it has shown positive and encouraging results. In terms of its impact on learning outcomes, however, the results are less clear. Mexican studies into gamification are rare, and of the four articles found for this paper, only one evaluates results of a course.

Accordingly, the following section will provide details of a study carried out in an EFL context at a Mexican university. The objectives of the study were to explore the effect of gamified instruction on student motivation and grades in and high intermediate English course. The research questions were 1) What is the impact of gamified instruction on student scores on a TOEIC test? and 2) What is the impact of gamified instruction on student motivation and engagement in a high intermediate level English language course?

Methodology

The study was carried out at a university in Guadalajara, Mexico. English is a graduation requirement and students are asked to present proof of English proficiency through one of the many standardized tests available (TOEFL, TOEIC, CAE, BULATS, IELTS, etc.). Students who are not planning to continue their studies abroad frequently opt for the Test of English for International Communication

(TOEIC) because it is commonly accepted at their workplaces, and this exam is administered at the university several times during the school term. Depending on their field of study, students need to obtain between 750 and 795 points (out of a maximum of 990) on the test in order to fulfill the requirement.

The university belongs to the private sector, and many of the students have been in bilingual schools for much of their lives. They have access to study abroad programs and private language classes, as well. Thus, they frequently believe that they do not need to continue their English studies. However, the school regulations state that they must continue with language classes until they have fulfilled their exam requirement. This means that many students in language classes are unwilling and unmotivated.

Participants

Participants in the research were 81 students from different fields of study at the university who were taking a TOEIC preparation course. They needed to have at least a B2 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference, as determined by either a previous placement test, or by having studied previous levels. Thirty-three of the participants were male and forty-eight were female; they ranged in ages from 18 to 24 years old. They were divided into four groups with three different teachers. Two of the groups took a traditional exam preparation course, while the other two groups were in a gamified classroom. Students enrolled in the classes depending on their schedules, but they were given the option to move into or out of a gamified class, according to their preferences.

Participants in the gamified classes were given a consent form to read and to sign. The form included information about the purpose of the study, and the characteristics of the activities they would be carrying out. They were told that their information would remain anonymous, and that they could opt out of the study at any time without penalty.

Procedure

Control groups

There were thirty-three participants in the control groups, divided into two different sections, working in different schedules but with the same professor.

Each group met twice a week. Their class activities consisted of doing reading and listening comprehension practices, reviewing grammar and vocabulary, and taking quizzes and mini-tests similar to those on the official TOEIC.

Experimental groups

Forty-eight students participated in the experimental groups. They were divided into two different sections, working in different schedules with two different teachers. Each group met twice a week.

At the beginning of the semester, they were informed that the class would follow a gamified approach. They were given an explanation and an example of the types of activities they would be doing, and they were given the option to move to another class if they preferred to do so. As part of the gamification framework, students were told that they had been hired by a firm called "Creative Inc.", which offers creative solutions to diverse problems. Throughout the semester, they would be receiving different problems and they would need to work together or individually, to solve them. This forms the narrative framework required for gamification.

Examples of activities included designing a creative business card, doing market research, and developing advertising for a new brand of snacks, or using an established set of materials (post-its, paper clips, rubber bands, etc.) to prevent student copying on exams. In one series of classes, students worked in teams to think up a product or service that satisfied an existing need. For example, one team decided on a smartphone application that helped in finding a parking space. They then had to "pitch" their idea to other students who played the role of "investors". Another activity was the *chindogu*- a Japanese term for creative, but useless inventions that, according to Wikipedia "seem to be ideal solutions to particular problems, but which may cause more problems than they solve." These activities fit within the gamified narrative of the course. At the same time, they are flexible because there are many ways to approach the problems, and many possible solutions.

Participants were also encouraged to do creative activities outside the classroom, including eating something they had never eaten before, or doing something they had never done before. Points and badges were awarded for every activity, depending on its complexity, on how well the students had followed instructions, on the creativity of the solutions, and on other criteria previously established. Points were also given for arriving to class on time, and for speaking only English in the classroom. These points and badges constitute the rewards typical of gamified classes.

Students also had access to an online platform of commercially produced learning materials. They were assigned certain activities for homework, and they were encouraged to do other activities when the teacher believed they needed to review or practice specific grammar structures. These activities were also awarded points. The points were tallied up at the end of the semester and were included as a percentage of the final grade. Students were awarded badges when they completed certain activities, and there was a leaderboard where they could see their progress in relation to other students. Leaderboards to measure progress foster a spirit of competition among the students, which is another element of gamification.

Data collection instruments

Students took a TOEIC exam at the end of the semester. Participant scores on the TOEIC test were taken as the quantitative data. The TOEIC is a standardized English language proficiency test administered by Educational Testing Services (ETS). It consists of 100 test items divided into two sections, one that tests listening comprehension, and a second that tests language usage and reading comprehension. The minimum score obtainable is 10 points, and the maximum is 990.

For the qualitative analysis, the students in the experimental groups were asked to complete a survey delivered online through Google Forms. The survey was developed for this study and was comprised of eleven items, plus two demographic questions. The survey contained both multiple choice and open questions. It asked the participants to compare this course with previous English courses they had taken. It asked what their favorite and least favorite activities had been, how they felt about not reviewing grammar in the class. It asked if getting points for the different activities was motivating for them, and how they had placed on the leaderboard. It asked how they felt about working in teams during the course, and finally it asked respondents' sex and field of study.

Data analysis and results

Quantitative data

The median TOEIC scores of both the control and the experimental groups were calculated. A Levene's test was conducted to determine homogeneity exists. The f-ratio value is 0.02221. The p-value is .882074. The result is not significant at $p < .05$. Thus, the requirement of homogeneity is met and an independent samples t-test is appropriate.

The 33 participants who took a gamified course (M = 820.15, DF=32, SD = 410.12) obtained higher scores on the TOEIC exam compared to the 24 students who did not (M = 720.62, DF=23 SD = 466.69). An independent samples one-tailed t-test was performed to measure the difference in median TOEIC scores between the students in the experimental courses and those in the control groups, showing $t = 2.31$, $p = .012052$. The result is significant at $p < .05$., and the null hypothesis is rejected. This result indicates that students who took the gamified version of the course performed better on the TOEIC test, even though their course did not specifically focus on exam preparation. The effect size (g = 0.228977) is small.

If we analyze the listening and reading sections individually, we find statistically significant differences in both. For listening comprehension, the t-value is 1.884. The p-value is .032427. The result is significant at $p < .05$. For reading, the t-value is 2.51238. The p-value is .007477. The result is significant at $p < .01$. Thus, the gains in reading comprehension were greater than those in listening comprehension for the experimental group.

Qualitative data

Participants in the experimental groups were sent an open-ended questionnaire via Google Forms upon completion of the course. The questionnaires not only served to collect data, but they also functioned as an opportunity for students to express their feelings about the gamified course. They were told that responses were voluntary, and 24 completed questionnaires were received. This corresponds to 72% of the students in the group.

They were asked how the course differed from other English classes they had taken, either at the university or elsewhere. Three of the comments were negative:

1. The first course was only grammar and exercises and I learned. In this course we only stimulated creativity and that's fine, but I'm not reinforcing the language…in fact, I think I moved backwards.
2. Truthfully, I didn't like it. I don't feel I advanced and I didn't practice my English.
3. Without books it's harder to learn.

The remaining 21 responses were more positive. Students who did well on the exam and the course were more likely to express satisfaction with the gamified approach, but even some students who did not do so well were positive in their appreciation:

4. I had never taken a course like it. It is the same as the other courses in that it focuses on the impetus for the student to speak English all the time, it is different in the MUCH more dynamic way of interacting with the students and teaching.
5. It is very different, it focuses a lot on what you can contribute as a student and it guides you according to the ideas you have with the help of the guide, who in this case would be the teacher.
6. Well, it is very different because learning is much more empirical and I do not find any similarity because you feel the freedom to learn.
7. It is totally different from the traditional English courses that I have taken so far, it is more interactive, I enjoy going to the class to see what new surprises there will be, they make me leave my comfort zone but I feel that it leaves me not only learning the language but experiences as a person and knowledge about very interesting topics.
8. I took a course last semester with the same professor. This is different, in this course the teacher is not so involved but rather the students are allowed to use their creativity and work as a team.

Teamwork was one the most valued aspects of this course, as expressed by the respondents:

9. I learn from others
10. […] it has been shown that teamwork stimulates the areas of self-motivation, creativity and learning since you face problems to solve, you learn more from others.
11. When we work as a team, we come up with more ideas or from one idea we can complete it to make it better.
12. For these types of activities, it is better to work as a team.
13. We help each other if we make a mistake.
14. Work is much more enjoyable.
15. We all think differently and that helps to do better work
16. I believe that when you work as a team you do a better job because you complement everyone's abilities and you get better results. Everyone does what they like best.
17. Each one contributes different things and the work becomes richer
18. Working as a team there is a greater flow of ideas and things are resolved faster.
19. We can have different points of view and thus work better-
20. That's how people who excel come to excel, by working as a team.
21. I share ideas and I have tried to express myself in English.

It is interesting to note that they made an effort to use English with their teammates during team activities. This may be due to the fact that they received extra points for only using English in class. They also mentioned that they found most of the activities to be enjoyable, but the ones they liked best were those with real-world application:

22. The last activity, we must make a change to change the behavior of the people of the [university] and we have been thinking about what we could do. I like it a lot because you use creativity, something that you never use in other subjects.

23. The ones I liked the most were the ones in which we had to find the solution to a problem as a team. Like the last exercise that we worked on in the semester was to find a problem in the [university], find a solution to the problem and look for means to put it into practice.
24. The ones that involve doing creative work and forming ideas by doing things like polls, presentations, and so on. I like it because I look for different ways of expressing myself to get my ideas across.

Among the activities that respondents disliked were presentations, as they felt uncomfortable having to stand in front of the group and speak English. Another student mentioned not liking the cutting and pasting activities, as he felt he was back in kindergarten. A third student was uncomfortable with the creative aspects of the course:

25. It's kind of repetitive where the course takes you always create this and create this, I think it's a bit tedious the fact that all the classes want you to be creative.

For the most part, however, the participants' perception of the gamified course and its contents were positive. They liked that the course was different, dynamic, and fun. They enjoyed the opportunity to be creative, and they felt they learned a lot, not only in regard to English, but in other skills as well. We asked respondents their field of studies at the university, and we noticed that negative comments tended to come from students of accounting, and those who did more poorly on the TOEIC exam, whereas students of communications and engineering, and those who got high scores on the TOEIC, tended to be overwhelmingly positive. However, as the sample size is small, these findings cannot be generalized.

Discussion

The gamified course described in this study included classical elements of game design, such as rewards, badges, leaderboards, individual and collective tasks (Hung, 2017). It followed Nicholson's (2015) recommendations including a story line (the Creative, Inc. company), information about the purpose and utility of the activities, and the opportunity for reflection (in the final questionnaire).

Unlike other studies (Laskowski & Badurowicz, 2014), where the impact of gamified instruction on student learning was not clear, here the impact was clearly positive and statistically significant, albeit with a small effect size. This is in line with the study by Chiñas Palacios et al. (2019), who also reported a positive effect on student learning.

Our study showed that students who took a gamified TOEIC exam course did better than those who took a more traditional course. The fact that the participants in the gamified course did a lot of reading and listening in order to carry out their tasks most likely contributed to this positive effect. On the traditional course, reading and listening activities were limited to test practices, whereas in the gamified version, participants read or listened in order to get information they needed. Abusa'aleek and Baniabdelrahman (2020) also found that gamification was effective in increasing reading comprehension in their study of sixth grade students.

The perception of gamification was positive among most of the participants, and they found the course engaging, consistent with results from other studies (Hursen & Bas, 2019; Fernández-Portero & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022). Most of our respondents appear to have been intrinsically, rather than extrinsically, motivated by the activities. That is, they did the activities because they found them fun, and not merely to get to points rewarded or to win the competition. This contrasts with the findings of other studies (Hursen & Bas, 2019; Fernández-Portero & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022) whose participants were more extrinsically motivated.

Contrary to our study, Moncada and Moncada (2014) found their accounting students to be positively motivated by gamified instruction. As noted above, their course was more game-based than true gamification, but it is worth noting that accountants are not *per se* disinclined toward games in the classroom.

Some of our respondents found the activities to be tedious or repetitive. Some found the constant focus on creativity to be tiring. Future iterations of the course should aim for more variety of the tasks to be carried out to avoid these perceptions.

Conclusions

Gamification–using game-like elements in situations that are not games, such as the classroom- emerged as an exciting educational approach in the past decade. It was adopted in classrooms in numerous fields, including ELT. Though it has shown to be promising, gamification is time –and resource– consuming, and little research has been done into its effectiveness in improving student learning. Because of these, and other factors, including the COVID-related school lock-downs, the interest in gamified instruction seems to have died down somewhat. This chapter has attempted to show that gamification is worthwhile.

The study detailed in this paper measured the impact of a gamified approach to English language learning on TOEIC scores of participants. Results show that gamification has the potential to help learners improve their exam scores, especially on the reading section, even if their classes do not focus specifically on test preparation. The results also indicate that gamification is not for everyone. Stronger students tended to enjoy the activities more than weaker students, and they appeared to benefit more from them as well.

Limitations of the study include the small sample size. Though the findings are encouraging, it cannot be emphatically stated that it was gamification that made the difference in student grades; other factors, such as the teachers, individual characteristics of the students, scheduling, and a host of others may have played a role in the results.

Most studies on gamification tend to look at its effect on motivation. More studies need to focus on learning outcomes. Other studies need to show consistently positive results in order to persuade teachers and institutions to adopt gamification. It is difficult to ask teachers and institutions to spend time and money creating gamified activities for their classes if these do not actually help students to learn more effectively.

At the same time, some tantalizing findings need to be explored further. For example, what is the correlation (if any) between acceptance of gamified approaches and students' field of studies? Are students of communication and engineering more likely to enjoy gamification than accounting majors? What about students in other disciplines?

Another area worth exploring is why the gamified version of the course led to greater gains in reading comprehension. Other studies could seek to replicate this research, to see if these results are consistent.

The authors hope to have contributed to clarifying some misconceptions or misunderstandings of the term gamification and what it implies. We hope to have shown that it can be effective, both for fostering engagement and for improving grades, in the English language class. We hope to have piqued the curiosity of the readers so that they will learn more about the topic, and perhaps try it themselves, in their own classrooms.

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Raising Students' Awareness of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity of English Language Through Classroom Exposure

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Abstract

In modern times, the use of English has spread around the globe as a *lingua franca* for international communication. This expansion has resulted in the development of English varieties that exhibit phonological, lexical, and grammatical differences that have prevailed among its users to achieve communication (Mckay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). Due to this linguistic singularity, the teaching of English needs to be addressed from an international perspective in which language learners need to develop a more comprehensive understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of *World Englishes* (WEs) varieties (Lee, 2012). In these terms, an action research was conducted to explore students' attitudes towards nine varieties of English before and after the implementation of awareness-raising activities of WEs. The study took place in a public high school located in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Participants in this study were thirty-five students who were exposed to a four-week period of class sessions oriented to raising awareness of WEs. To collect data, pre-and post-questionnaires were administered, along with a reflective essay at the end of the intervention. Results indicated that students demonstrated a stronger preference for English Western varieties of the so-called *Inner Circle*. However, after the implementation of the awareness raising activities of WEs, learners showed more acceptance and

understanding of other English varieties. In addition, students reported more confidence and acceptance of their own Mexican accent. They also showed more enthusiasm about learning other English varieties that were not presented in class. Nevertheless, more efforts need to be done in the Mexican teaching context to embrace linguistic diversity and lessen linguistic stereotypes that favor Anglo-ethnocentric views of English.

Keywords: *English language teaching, English as an international language, World Englishes, linguistic diversity, raising awareness*.

Introduction

Globalization along with the emergence of information technology has increased the need and interest of people around the globe to socially interact, exchange and disseminate information on a daily basis. Global interactions are mainly carried out in English, making this language a *lingua franca* for international communication and cooperation (McKay, 2002). In this sense, the learning and teaching of English as a lingua franca for international communication should avoid being limited to the codification of linguistic rules of a certain English variety. Instead, the learning of English should embrace the awareness of different linguistic varieties of native and non-native speakers of English. This approach highlights the importance of including sociolinguistics aspects of language teaching in practice. Following this idea, English as an International Language (EIL) consists of firstly exposing the learners to language varieties, then raising awareness of these varieties, and finally developing respect towards English language users from different countries and language backgrounds (McKay, 2002). Moreover, it focuses on communicative strategies dealing with linguistic differences. Also, it remarks on the importance of equipping the English language learner with linguistic abilities to face the complex and diverse contexts of a globalized world (Syrbe, 2018).

To address some of the challenges mentioned above, the General Direction of Industrial and Technological Education (DGETI by its Spanish acronym) seeks to develop Global and Multicultural competencies in upper secondary students so that they can participate in both the workplace and the demands of the international arena. The latter, in a context of equity, flexibility, comprehensiveness, and openness to satisfy the social and economic needs of the country (Gobierno de México, 2016). In these realms, some of the strategies implemented by DGETI in its curriculum is the study of English as an additional language with a formative purpose. In this sense, by studying English, learners will acquire the ability to communicate with speakers from different countries. Also, they will develop the abilities to read, understand, write, and express themselves in the target language within the different areas they may face in their field. Among the generic competencies that the English program proposes, it states the importance of maintaining a respectful attitude towards interculturality and diversity of beliefs, values, ideas, and social practices (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2012).

This research took place in a Mexican context, in the state of Tamaulipas, a northern state of the country. One group of English language learners was part of the research project. This group was enrolled in the fifth semester of the Technological, Industrial, and Service Baccalaureate Center 24 (CBTIS 24 by its Spanish acronym), which is a public high school in Ciudad Victoria belonging to the DGETI subsystem. This study addressed the following general objectives:

- To explore students' attitudes towards WEs before the implementation of awareness- raising activities.
- To observe students' attitudes towards WEs after the implementation of awareness - raising activities.

With the goals from above, this study intends to orient language educators and language professionals to understand firstly, how the English language has evolved through time and how diverse second language contexts could be. Secondly, it aims to illustrate how current trends for language teaching are also oriented to develop intercultural awareness. Thirdly, it seeks to acknowledge the importance of English language diversity and how to raise students' awareness through classroom practices. Finally, this study intends to develop linguistic and cultural awareness to enable learners to participate in global interactions.

Literature Review

Globalization and English Language Teaching

Globalization is a term which is not easy to define nor to explain. The term encompasses economic integration, the spread of knowledge around the world, transfer of policies and cultures. In response to globalization, educational institutions around the world are concerned with providing the students with an international education, where international awareness and communication are required (Marlina, 2013). Global changes and international interactions have led educational institutions to re-conceptualize the way knowledge is transmitted to students and to re-formulate the skills and abilities needed to face these changes (Marlina, 2013). One of the strategies taken by educational institutions in response to globalization is the integration of English Language Teaching into curriculums.

Language teaching has been practiced over the years aimed at providing the learner with linguistic competencies. However, in recent times, language teaching is distinguished as a way to develop cross-cultural understanding and a transnational perspective. "It is a matter of learning through culture as well as learning about it. Only by gaining insight into the other can learners gain an outside view of themselves" (Fenner, 2017, p. 207). In this regard, Da Costa and Crowther (2018) have argued that the teaching of English has no longer the position of a "foreign language"; but it has become one of the basic skills of global competence, as well.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Huntington (1996) claimed that English is the language for the world's way of communicating interculturally since it presupposes the existence of different or separate cultures, and not a way of eliminating them. English is considered not a source of identity, but a vehicle for communication. Hence, due to the number of people using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), different Englishes have emerged and, in some cases, these Englishes are almost unintelligible one to another.

The spread of English in the world has led to the proliferation of ideas that consider English as a type of political, cultural, and economic imperialism, which has prevailed through school programs and materials developed by specific governments (Pennycook, 2007). However, nowadays, fewer interactions among native-native speakers of English occur. On the other hand, the number of interactions among non-native speakers of English is increasing. In view of this phenomenon, proponents of ELF have made suggestions on how the teaching of English should evolve to meet these current requirements. For example, intelligibility is positioned above a native-like accuracy. Also, ELF focuses on pragmatic strategies which are needed in intercultural interactions. The main goal in an ELF model is not a native speaker but a proficient bilingual speaker who maintains his/her identity.

World Englishes (WEs)

The discovery and colonization of the American and Asian continents triggered the spread of English through nations. Later, English took a significant step in the 20th century when it was adopted by many newly-independent states as an official or semi-official language. The widespread use of English in the world resulted in the adaptation of the language to new places and cultures, which led to the emergence of different varieties known as World Englishes (WEs), a term coined by the Indian-American scholar Braj Kachru in 1985.

The term "World Englishes" has been defined in different ways. Bolton (2004) presents three interpretations of this term. Firstly, in a broad sense, it represents all the varieties of English, also referred to as "World English", "International English", or "Global English". Secondly, in a narrow sense, it refers to the new Englishes in Asia, Africa, also called "nativized" or "new Englishes" (Matsuda, 2019).

From the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, there was an emergence of "World Englishes" topics that started to be explored such as the ownership of English and the spread of English and its variations. "World Englishes" represents the English spoken by native speakers as well as the people who learn it in a classroom. WEs is considered a democratic paradigm because it attempts to empower non-native speakers of English; this means that anyone who speaks English deserves to be called the owner of this language (Saengboon, 2015).

Besides the expansion of the English language, the demographics of English-speaking communities have also evolved. Kachru (1985) conceived English around the world in the form of three concentric circles (Inner, Outer, Expanding) that represent the global usage of English. The Inner Circle corresponds to the countries in which the inhabitants speak English as a first or native language. These countries belong to three different geographical blocs: The New World (United States, Canada, West Indies), Europe (United Kingdom and Ireland) and countries in the Southern Hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa). Approximately, in these regions there are more than 300 million people speaking English as a first language, mostly of them living in North America (Svartvik & Leech, 2016).

The Outer Circle represents countries where English is spoken as a Second Language, sometimes as an official or semi-official language. Among the regions with these characteristics there are former colonies of the Inner Circle in Africa and Asia, such as India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, and Malaysia. The Expanding Circle corresponds to places where English is learned as a foreign language because of its importance for incorporating in areas such as industry, business, education technology, etc. This circle embraces countries such as Germany, Netherlands, Colombia, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, etc. The expanding circle is considered to be in constant growth (Svartvik & Leech, 2016).

Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL)

English is currently an official and unofficial lingua franca in international interactions (McKay, 2002). According to Ethnolongue (2021), there are 1.268 billion English speakers around the world. Such events have given English the status of an international language (Marlina, 2013). A language is considered as a global language when it is recognized not only by its native speakers but beyond (Matsuda, 2012).

The increasing evolution of the English language has supported the decision of Applied Linguists and researchers to evolve from the tradition of an ESL paradigm to an EIL paradigm, in which teaching English with a pluricentric mindset of fostering international and intercultural communication are the main goals (Matsuda 2012; Sharifian & Marlina, 2012).

Mckay (2018), states that Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) has its specific principles. Firstly, it recognizes the English varieties spoken in the world but also how diverse second language (SL) contexts could be. In this sense, pedagogical interventions should be done in accordance with local, social and educational needs. In addition, TEIL pinpoints the possibility of using the first language (L1) in a language learning classroom when considered adequate. Finally, it is also remarkable the teaching of strategic intercultural competence in the classroom. TEIL consists of a new ELT paradigm originated from "World Englishes" studies (Matsuda, 2019). TEIL does not promote one preferred variety of English in international contexts. On the other hand, it assumes that in such situations, multiple varieties of English will be present. Some of the practices that this paradigm suggests are:

a. Exposure to awareness of and respect for English linguistic and cultural diversity.
b. Focus on communication strategies to negotiate linguistic differences.

Raising Language and Cultural Awareness of English Varieties

Kachru (1985) has stated that English is a diverse language with local forms in each community. Hence, teaching English embraces the responsibility to make students aware of this diversity. In an English language course, the decision of selecting a particular variety of English as the instructional variety should be made according to the student's goals and needs, teachers' expertise as well as the availability of materials. Matsuda (2012) points out that there is no one variety that can be successfully used in all international communication situations. Therefore, Matsuda proposes three alternatives: a) teaching an international variety of English, b) teaching the speakers' own variety of English, or c) teaching an established variety of English.

The first alternative consists of selecting an international variety of the language which favors the prevalence of a monolithic perspective. This option seems attractive at the moment of establishing static rules that could be taught and it makes assessment more simplified (Matsuda, 2012). The second possibility consists of teaching the speakers' own variety of English. In this sense, the World Englishes paradigm privileges the Inner and Outer Circle, considering the Expanding circle as norm-dependent (Matsuda, 2012). Hino (2019) states the idea for Expanding circle countries to develop and practice their own variety of English in which they can express their indigenous values and culture. A third possibility proposed by Matsuda (2012) is to select one established variety as the dominant in instruction while introducing other varieties as regular practice in the classroom.

The last alternative is considered to reflect in a better way the reality of Englishes and at the same time it is easy to implement in various contexts. Matsuda (2012) refers to an "established variety" as English varieties that are widely used and well accepted in international contexts. Typically, the main instructional varieties in Expanding Circle territories are American or British English, which is totally reasonable because they are considered "established" varieties of English. Nevertheless, a key factor here is that although one instructional variety is selected, it is expected that learners are informed that the variety they are learning is just one from many more. Students need to be aware and to some extent prepared for future encounters with other varieties.

Regarding the last possibility, Matsuda (2012) proposes three approaches to increase students' awareness of English varieties. The first approach consists of providing the learner with opportunities to be in contact with speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The second approach proposed is to "increase students' meta knowledge of Englishes by making it a lesson focus" (Matsuda, 2012, p. 25), for example to include textbooks that include World Englishes varieties. The third approach consists of exposing students to different varieties through teaching materials.

It might be hard to provide students with this exposure because of the limited linguistic and cultural diversity found in ELT textbooks. For instance, Lopriorie and Vettorel (2015) have shown that ELT textbooks tend to focus on British or American varieties of English as sole exemplifications of the language, which has led to the development of a monolithic view of English language. However, a monolithic perspective does not adequately prepare learners nor foster awareness of the current English diversity. In this regard, professors can complement or adapt the audios included in their textbooks with audios from different varieties of English. It is also relevant for students and teachers to understand that this diversity is not only a matter of pronunciation but also a manifestation of culture, language and values.

Additionally, Anand (2019) considers that every teacher should expose their students to English varieties, with the purpose of expanding students' perspectives and respect towards diversity. Similar to this claim, Matsuda (2018) states that language teachers must provide learners with knowledge, experience and skills to be part of the complex and diverse English-speaking world. The incorporation of World Englishes into English language classes through raising awareness of English language diversity seems to be beneficial for learners in many aspects. For instance, Matsuda (2019) argues that learners can develop realistic expectations about their future interlocutors. In addition, non-native speakers' interactions can be role models for them. Moreover, it has been proved that this incorporation may result in a reduction of classroom anxiety and the increase of language learning achievement (Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016).

Studies aimed to raise awareness of the varieties of English

Important research projects have been carried out in the discipline of WEs into the ELT classroom. The results and data obtained have provided academics with pertinent practices and suggestions to apply in our particular contexts. To mention some of them, Matsuda (2000) conducted a qualitative case study of Japanese secondary school students' attitudes toward the English language; one of the principal findings was that students held a prominent western-centered view of the world. The author suggests the importance of preparing students for international communication. Students' attitudes showed limited awareness of the world and some stereotypes against unfamiliar communities were notorious. Matsuda concludes that a good understanding of World Englishes is considered beneficial to any EFL learner.

Furthermore, Bayyurt and Altinmakas (2012) implemented a course at a Turkey University entitled *"Oral Communication Skills in English"*. The authors observed that the students possessed a limited awareness of other varieties of

English different to British and American English. The researcher incorporated awareness-raising activities to challenge their attitudes and make them familiar with varieties of World Englishes. At the end of the course, they noted how students recognized the importance of "mutual intelligibility".

Besides, D' Angelo (2012) and Chukyo University in Japan developed a WEs/EIL program that can be applied in the classroom. This program helped to raise students' awareness of language change and to understand that English varieties are part of the evolutionary nature of language. Also, the program was emphasized in promoting the importance of understanding local culture and values.

Also, Marlina (2013), developed a case study in an Australian University in which an EIL program was implemented, having the English language cultural and linguistic diversity as the core of its curriculum; the results showed that students developed knowledge, attitudes, and skills they needed for using English across cultures. Moreover, students developed an appreciation for their accents and cultures.

Ayuthaya and Sitthitikul (2016) noticed that many students were afraid to speak English and they had experienced anxiety by having to follow native speakers' norms (mainly British and North American) as a measure to evaluate their success or failure. Their study aimed to explore the pedagogical implications regarding the reduction of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) through the incorporation of WEs in the classroom practice. They conducted a mixed-method approach study in Thai tertiary students which demonstrated that lack of students' awareness of English varieties may result in negative attitudes towards their own and other non-native speakers (NNS) English varieties as well as an increment of FLCA.

Additionally, Almegren (2018) conducted a study in two public educational institutes in Saudi Arabia that aimed at investigating students' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes of World Englishes. The main purpose was to study the attitude of Saudi students towards the concept of World Englishes. Results indicated that students favored the Englishes from the United States and the United Kingdom, which may be attributed to a lack of awareness of English varieties.

Classroom materials and resources implemented to raise students' awareness of the varieties of English

By previous research, it has been demonstrated that the level of WEs awareness is not permanent, but it can be raised through different factors such as practice and exposure. However, according to the Purdue Online Writing Lab website there is no "one size fits all" approach for incorporating World Englishes in the classroom. In this sense, Kachru (1992) proposes the possibility to start these incorporations by an attitudinal and methodological paradigm shift in the classroom. He made the following suggestions:

a. Sociolinguistic profile: an overview of World Englishes with discussions of the different varieties, their users and uses.
b. Variety exposure: to expose students to native and non-native varieties of English.
c. Attitudinal neutrality: to focus on one specific instructional variety but also foster awareness and validity of other varieties.

In addition to these suggestions, the main purpose of awareness-raising activities is to explore how language works in everyday life. Therefore, activities are typically task-based, with exercises aimed to develop students' metalinguistic reflection. Setting a list of common activities for awareness raising may result hard because that will depend on the specific learners' needs, ages, and proficiency levels of each group. Nevertheless, Dufva (1994) proposed some useful general ideas for activities that can be further adapted or modified according to the needs of a given class:

a. Talk/small talk: it can be done in group work, cooperative tasks, debates, or interviews.
b. Observation: learners may observe language in use, it can be done individually or in groups. Teachers can provide the students with pictures, clips, ads, texts, tapes, or video tapes to be observed.
c. Tasks: they can vary from group to group. In a class with children, teachers can use games, teenagers may feel more attracted with computer games and adults may feel more motivated with texts or puzzles.

In the same vein, it is suggested by Matsuda (2002) and Marlina (2013) that a successful introduction of WEs to the language classroom requires the use of proper instructional materials. Lee (2012) suggests the introduction of movie clips, role-plays, and simulations in WEs classes.

Besides, Matsuda (2002) proposes the use of original materials with speakers who belong to the outer and expanding circles. Furthermore, Anand (2019) states that due to technological advancements, the number of English speakers is growing exponentially and this represents different accents and cultural identities among people. For this reason, he considers it relevant to incorporate English varieties in the language classroom through teaching materials such as posters, YouTube videos, and TED talks.

Additionally, Ören et al., (2017) aimed at raising students' awareness of English varieties with the implementation of WEs-adapted classroom materials, which consisted of firstly, presenting the learner with some concepts such as World Englishes, the varieties of English, English as a Lingua Franca, speakers from the Inner, Outer, and Expanding circles, etc. Secondly, exposing the learner to different varieties of English through videos and songs; then the students could be asked to reflect and participate in discussions and complete some exercises.

Methodology

This study followed an action research approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Participants were selected based on their ready availability, which is a technique known as "convenience sampling" (Frey, 2018). Participants took pre-and post-questionnaires before and after the implementation of WEs awareness-raising activities. Additionally, students wrote reflective essays with the purpose to enrich the information collected from the quantitative tool. Descriptive statistics and manual analysis by themes and categories were employed respectively.

Context

The study was conducted in the Technological, Industrial, and Service Baccalaureate Center (CBTIS by its Spanish acronym) 24 from Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Within its study plan, CBTIS 24 offers six different technical careers to be chosen in the second year of high school. These programs aim to endow the students with professional abilities to incorporate in higher education institutions or the working sector. From the first year of school, students are provided with English language classes with an average of 3 hours per week.

The formative purpose of the English subject in CBTIS 24 is that students acquire the ability to communicate, and develop abilities to read, understand, write, and express themselves in the target language within different areas they may face in the technical fields of study. In addition, the subject aims to provide the student with contents and skills needed to face the 21st century challenges. Limited evidence of the immersion of "World Englishes" or the position of English as an International Language is observed in official documents as well as in textbooks implemented in CBTIS 24. Nevertheless, among the generic competences that the program proposes, it remarks on the importance of maintaining a tolerant attitude towards interculturality and diversity (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2012).

Data Collection

Once a week, students participated in sessions of 60 minutes each. The four sessions were aimed at exposing students to different varieties of English through digital resources such as videos and audios. Tasks, observations, and discussions were also carried out.

In the first session, students were asked to fill in a questionnaire about attitudes and awareness of "World Englishes". The questionnaire statements were divided into four main categories: a) perception of WEs, b) Mexican accented English, c) perception of native and non-native teachers, and d) ownership of English. Then, students were introduced to the session to be later informed about the current international status of the English language and its users. Further, students and the teacher analyzed and discussed relevant concepts, such as World Englishes, Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles. The second session consisted of exposing the students to Inner Circle varieties of English: British and American English. Background information about historical moments of each nation were discussed and how the English language began to expand across the globe. In the third session, students were exposed to two Outer Circle varieties:

Hong Kong and Indian English. In this part, the use of English as a second language was discussed and comprehended. Students listened to authentic audios and watched videos and interviews of people from those countries. Finally, in session number four, students were exposed to Expanding circle varieties: Japanese and Korean English. The concept of English as a Foreign language was discussed, and students were informed about how speakers' native language may influence their English. At the end of the last session, students were asked to take for the second time the WEs attitudinal and awareness questionnaire. Additionally, they were provided with some questions to be answered in a reflective essay. These questions were the following:

- What did you learn in these four weeks?
- What was interesting or surprising for you?
- What was difficult to understand?
- Which variety is most interesting to you? Why?
- Have you changed your attitude to Englishes in any way as a result of this work?

Results and Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed along with the data obtained from the students' reflective essays. These were analyzed bearing in mind the categories studied in questionnaires. However, the qualitative instrument also revealed additional information which will be detailed in the rest of this chapter. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed keeping in mind the following research questions:

- What were students' attitudes towards WEs before the implementation of awareness- raising activities?
- What were students' attitudes towards WEs after the implementation of awareness-raising activities?

In Table 1.1 below, we can appreciate the students' perception towards English varieties before being introduced to the awareness-raising activities. Respondents tend to show preferences towards British English as the correct English

(71,4%), compared to American English (45,7%). Most of the respondents do not consider other varieties as “incorrect” (91,4%). Nevertheless, in statements 7 and 8 we can appreciate their preferences towards learning American English at school (54,3%). In addition, they show interest in learning about other varieties of English (94,3%). Regarding Mexican-accented English, participants do not seem to consider their accent as “inappropriate” (5,7%).

Students’ Perception of World Englishes: Pre and Post Awareness-raising activities implementation

Statement	Mean	SD
1- Correct English is American English only.	1,543	0,505
2- Correct English is British English only.	1,286	0,458
3- Other varieties of English are incorrect.	1,914	0,284
4- Hong Kong and Indian English are incorrect English.	1,857	0,355
5- I am interested in learning/knowing the differences that exist in different varieties of English.	1,057	0,236
6- Mexican-accented English is just wrong English.	1,943	0,236
7- English at school must be British.	1,771	0,426
8- English at school must be American.	1,457	0,505
9- Other variations of English should be taught.	1,086	0,284

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 1.1 Mean Ratings of Perceptions of World Englishes–Pre-Survey (N=35)

Next, Table 1.2 shows slight changes in students’ responses. After being exposed to awareness-raising activities of WEs, some changes in perceptions are reported. Regarding considering American and British English as the only correct varieties the percentage of agreement is lower 14,1% and 22,9% respectively. Surprisingly, the mean in statement 3 shows that more students consider other varieties as incorrect after the awareness-raising activities. These may be related to the still strong preference towards inner circle varieties.

Statement	Mean	SD
1- Correct English is American English only.	1,857	0,355
2- Correct English is British English only.	1,771	0,426
3- Other varieties of English are incorrect.	1,800	0,406
4- Hong Kong and Indian English are incorrect English.	1,886	0,323
5- I am interested in learning/knowing the differences that exist in different varieties of English.	1	0
6-Mexican-accented English is just wrong English.	1,971	0,169
7- English at school must be British.	1,714	0,458
8- English at school must be American.	1,743	0,443
9- Other variations of English should be taught.	1,029	0,169

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 1.2 Mean Ratings of Perceptions of World Englishes–Post-Survey (N=35)

Nevertheless, the qualitative instrument reveals significant data regarding students' perceptions about World Englishes. These statements could give us an insight about important attitudes' changes. In lines from excerpt 1 this data is presented:

Excerpt 1

Student B: *"...there are many varieties of English and they are all correct, there is no correct or incorrect accent of it".*

Student C: *"...I used to believe that American English was the most correct, but thanks to the course I was able to understand that all varieties of English are correct".*

Student BB: *"…actually all types of English spoken around the world are correct no matter what accent you speak it with".*

Student CC: *"…I thought that the correct one was the American or the British but the course made me realize and see different types of English that are correct".*

Additionally, it was observed that students' writings revealed a common perception. Before the awareness-raising activities students were not aware of the existence of other varieties of English different to American or British; which is in line with some previous research findings that confirm this idea (Matsuda, 2000; Bayyurt & Altinmakas, 2012; D' Angelo, 2012; Almegren 2018). This western-centered view of the world may be related to findings of Lopriore and Vettorel (2015)'s research which showed that ELT textbooks tend to focus on these two varieties as unique examples of the language. The lack of awareness and exposure is presented in the following lines as expressed in excerpt number 2.

Excerpt 2

Student E: *"…I used to think that only American and British English existed."*

Student F: *"...I was only aware that British English and American English existed."*

Student G: *"Before this course I did not know that there were other types of English besides British…".*

Student J: *"…Before this course, I was only aware that there is American English and British English."*

Student W: *"…I thought there were only 2 types of English, American and British English".*

In statement 5 (Table 1.2), we see that the total number of participants now is interested in knowing or learning about different English varieties. Their thoughts about the idea of learning British English should be taught at school increases (28,6%); on the other hand, American English at school is now lower (25,7%). Their preference towards British English was also observed in the reflective essays as shown in excerpt 3 below:

Excerpt 3

Student J: "*The variety that interests me the most is British English because I really like how they pronounce things and how they make everything look very elegant*".
Student L: *"...British English since I like the accent, it seems more elegant and striking to me"*.
Student P: *"I'm more interested in the British… I like the way they pronounce… but I like the American too since I hear it more often and I'm more familiar with it"*.
Student X: "…*British English… in my opinion this type of English sounds more elegant or formal"*.

Also, in statement 6 (Table 1.2), students' perceptions about their "Mexican-accented" English shows slight changes. Although in the pre-survey, students' major perceptions do not consider Mexican-accented English as being "incorrect", there were analyzed more features about this perception in the next part of the survey (Statements 10-14).

Table 2.1 shows the students' responses in the pre-survey. In statement 10, students show completely disagreement with the idea of considering Mexican-accented English as embarrassing. In addition, 25,7% of the students consider it as "undesirable". The majority of the respondents (77,1%) show preferences towards learning a native English. Statements 13 and 14 have similar variances; approximately half of the students feel embarrassed when speaking English with a Mexican accent. In addition, students relate their success with their accent.

Students’ perception of Mexican-accented English: Pre and Post awareness-raising activities implementation.

Statement	Mean	SD
10- Mexican-accented English is embarrassing.	2	0
11- Heavy Mexican-accented English is undesirable	1,743	0,443
12- Mexicans should try to learn a native English.	1,229	0,426
13- I am embarrassed when speaking English with my Mexican accent.	1,486	0,507
14- I feel I would be more successful if I speak English without the Mexican accent	1,429	0,502

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 2.1 Mean Ratings of Mexican-accented English perceptions–Pre-Survey (N=35)

Table 2.2 shows students’ responses after the implementation of awareness-raising activities. We can appreciate that variances in Statement 10 continue similarly. However, it was at the analysis of the reflective essays where students show embarrassment feelings before participating in the raising-awareness activities (Excerpt 4); in addition, after these activities they seem to express a feeling of self-confidence in their Mexican-accent, which is in line with the findings of Ayuthaya and Sitthitikul (2016) who proved that incorporation of WEs in the language classroom may reduce students’ anxiety and provoke an increment in their learning achievement. In addition, James and Garret (1991) argued that when students become aware of linguistic diversity, they also become more empowered.

Statement	Mean	SD
10- Mexican-accented English is embarrassing.	2	0
11- Heavy Mexican-accented English is undesirable	1,857	0,355
12- Mexicans should try to learn a native English.	1,600	0,497
13- I am embarrassed when speaking English with my Mexican accent.	1,743	0,443
14- I feel I would be more successful if I speak English without the Mexican accent	1,771	0,426

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)
Table 2.2 Mean Ratings of Mexican-accented English perceptions–Post-Survey (N=35)

Excerpt 4

Student C: *"the Mexican accent when speaking English is not bad and that makes me feel more confident to be able to speak English…".*
Student D: *"...Before, I used to think that only Mexicans had that Mexican English accent, but now I see that everyone around the world has their own accent and their own variety, and that's fine and normal".*
Student M: *"Now I understand that I should not be ashamed of my way of speaking English… I learned a lot and it gave me more confidence to continue learning to speak English".*
Student: Q: *"… now I realize that we do not have to be ashamed of our English".*
Student X: *"…it is okay to have an accent when speaking English and there is no reason to feel bad about it".*

Besides, we can see that in statement 12, students' attitudes towards learning a native English also changed (40%). Finally, in statement 14 students' agreements towards linking their Mexican accent to their success is minor (22,9%).

Regarding students' perceptions towards native and non-native teachers, statements 15-19 show below the variances of the responses.

Table 3.1 shows in statement 15 that 48,6% of students prefer to learn English from a native teacher. Statements 16 and 17 are concerned with the idea of students' future interactions. 94,3% of participants agree with the idea of learning English to communicate with native speakers, whereas 71,4% of them state they are learning the language to communicate with non-native speakers. Finally, 51,4% of the students prefer a native teacher and 60% of them prefer a non-native teacher.

Students' perception of native and non-native teachers: Pre and Post awareness-raising activities implementation.

Statement	Mean	SD
15- It is important for me to learn English from native English-speaking teachers such as people from the USA or UK.	1,514	0,507
16- I am learning English so that I can communicate with native English speakers.	1,057	0,236
17- I am learning English so that I can communicate with non-native English speakers.	1,286	0,458
18- I prefer a native teacher to teach English.	1,486	0,507
19- I prefer a non-native teacher to teach English.	1,400	0,497

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 3.1 Mean Ratings of perceptions towards native and non-native teachers–Pre-Survey (N=35)

Table 3.2 shows students' responses after taking the awareness-raising activities. At a simple view, we can notice that there is no significant difference in the variances of the answers from pre and post surveys. So that, after taking the four sessions students seem to continue to prefer learning English from a native teacher. Regarding future interactions, most of the participants continue with the idea of learning English to communicate with native speakers. Nevertheless, it was in statement 17 where we can appreciate a slight change in students' answers. After being exposed to awareness-raising activities, it seems students now recognize they can also communicate in English with non-native speakers. Finally, students still prefer a non-native teacher over a native one.

Statement	Mean	SD
15- It is important for me to learn English from native English-speaking teachers such as people from the USA or UK.	1,571	0,502
16- I am learning English so that I can communicate with native English speakers.	1,114	0,323
17- I am learning English so that I can communicate with non-native English speakers.	1,029	0,169
18- I prefer a native teacher to teach English.	1,486	0,507
19- I prefer a non-native teacher to teach English.	1,343	0,482

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 3.2 Mean Ratings of perceptions towards native and non-native teachers–Post-Survey (N=35)

Students' perceptions of the ownership of English: Pre and Post awareness-raising activities implementation

Within this category, students' responses show their perceptions towards who owns the English language. Slight changes are appreciated in pre and post surveys; in addition, reflective essays also reveal important information. In the following lines the information is presented.

Table 4.1 shows a strong disagreement about the idea of considering British and Americans as owners of English. Opposite to this, 94,3% participants agree with the fact that English belongs to those who use it. These numbers may indicate that students do not have a western-centered perception of the ownership of English. The following part reveals students' answers after the implementation of the activities.

Statement	Mean	SD
20- British and Americans are owners of English.	1,857	0,355
21- English belongs to those who speak it.	1,057	0,236

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 4.1 Mean Ratings of perceptions towards the ownership of English language-Pre-Survey (N=35)

Table 4.2 shows the variances of responses after exposing students to awareness- raising activities of WEs. We can notice small significant differences in statements 20 and 21 (0.086 and 0.028) respectively.

Statement	Mean	SD
20- British and Americans are owners of English.	1,943	0,236
21- English belongs to those who speak it.	1,029	0,169

(Score: 1–Totally agree, 2–Totally disagree)

Table 4.2 Mean Ratings of perceptions towards the ownership of English language-Post-Survey (N=35)

To complement these quantitative results, the analysis of reflective essays shows important data as shown below in Excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5

Student A: *"...English belongs to those who speak it, it belongs to those who understand it, who want to speak it".*
Student: C: *"...I used to believe that American English was the most correct, but thanks to the course I was able to understand that all varieties of English are correct…".*
Student O: *"… that English does not belong only to those from the United States, that English belongs to everyone who speaks it."*
Student X: *"…English belongs to everyone who speaks it, whether they are native speakers or not".*
Student BB: *"… English belongs neither to the British nor to the Americans but to the people who speak it no matter where they are in the world".*

In addition to the previous categories, the analysis of the reflective essays also revealed more interesting data, which will be mentioned in lines from Excerpt 6:

Excerpt 6

Student I: *"I learned that there are many varieties of English... that English is really spoken by many people or learn it... now I respect all the people who speak English as well as their varieties…".*
Student V: *"…what I take most from this course is the fact of being aware that there is a great variety of types of English".*
Student B: *"Now I know that there are many varieties and for this reason it is very important to respect each one of them…".*
Student E: *"…in all that I saw and learned my attitude towards different English people changed, I respect them more and have become interested in some, I no longer believe that there is only one correct English".*

These comments seem to indicate that some students could become aware of the current existence of English varieties across the world with the help of the awareness raising activities implemented in the classroom. In addition, comments also seem to indicate an increased sense of respect and tolerance towards this diversity, which according to Anand (2019), it is essential to respect diversity to avoid racism. Similar to these findings, Jamesand Garret (1991) stated that by being involved in language awareness activities, students' tolerance and respect towards linguistic differences increase. Besides, students showed interest in learning more about these varieties. Regarding students' desire to learn more about English diversity, we can appreciate the following excerpt:

Excerpt 7

Student A: *"I think that this course encourages me to develop or experience searching for more knowledge of all the variants of the world…".*

Student H: *"…I am interested in learning more about the different types of English as it is very fascinating…".*

Student I: *"…I would like to learn a little more about these varieties…".*

Student J: *"… I will try to expand my knowledge so that I can learn more about English".*

Student X: *"… thanks to the (course) it motivated me to know more about the variations".*

We can also compare these findings to results obtained by Ören et al., (2017), which showed that students developed awareness of English varieties to some extent, but primarily they developed consciousness about the current English status and a sympathy towards its diversity.

Finally, there was an important idea that was frequently mentioned in the reflective essays; this consists of the students' understanding of the main purpose of learning or speaking a language, which is communication; these results are in line with some of the practices of an EIL-oriented paradigm, to position intelligibility above native-like accuracy. I present some of the excerpts in the following lines from Excerpt 8:

Excerpt 8

Student M: *"...As long as others understand what I want to communicate and I can understand others, the purpose is fulfilled".*

Student N: *"…as long as there is understanding and good communication… As long as this communication can take place, the fact that the pronunciation changes does not matter…".*

Student S: *"…as long as you can communicate and speak it is ok".*

Student W: *"…We must remember that the important thing is to be able to communicate with each other, without criticizing their pronunciation or accent depending on their nationality.".*

Student Z: *"... the important thing is that we can communicate with others".*

Student BB: *"… the main objective of why speak or learn a language, in my opinion, is to be able to communicate…".*

Conclusion

Due to technological advances and the globalizing forces, humans have more possibilities to share and interact with people from different cultures and languages. English language plays an important part in this phenomenon because since years ago and nowadays it has functioned as a lingua franca for those who desire to interact with diverse people. The proliferation of English through countries and its contact with diverse languages in the world have led to the emergence of new "Englishes" which are now part of the global society.

In Mexico, the teaching of English was introduced in the late 80's. However, in the state of Tamaulipas, especially in public educational institutions, this practice has been focused on gaining native-like proficiency. Students are constantly making efforts to acquire English and their outcomes are based on the native speaker model. This constant perception and attitude of preference towards only the Inner Circle Englishes may result in intolerant attitudes and racism. These attitudes and perceptions are demonstrated to be related to students' lack of awareness of English diversity.

Having in mind the above circumstances and the current practices in Mexico, this study was conducted with the purpose of exploring students' attitudes about "World Englishes" through quantitative and qualitative instruments of data collection. Additionally, it was intended to raise students' awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity of the English language through classroom exposure.

Participants were involved in awareness-raising activities of English varieties from the inner, outer and expanding circle. A pre and post questionnaire was administered to 35 high school students during this period; in addition, as the final step of the process they wrote a reflective essay with the goal of complementing data obtained from the quantitative instrument. Bearing in mind that eventually the need for more globally-minded citizens has become a reality, this work was contextually adapted for the Mexican EFL learner to become aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the English language.

Similar to previous studies about attitudes and awareness of WEs, participants of this research also favored inner circle varieties. 45% of students favored American English and 71% of them considered British English as the correct one; these responses might be related to students' common past experiences with the language, such as media and textbooks they have had throughout their academic life. Mexican high school students prefer American English to be taught at school; however, students' reflective essays showed that they consider British English as the most "formal" or "educated" one. These perceptions showed no significant changes after students' exposure. However, it is not surprising that students still preserve such attitudes because of their previous experiences.

It is clear that more efforts are needed if more significant changes are expected among students' perceptions and attitudes towards English diversity. It was notorious that Mexican students seem to really appreciate and value the opportunity they had to broaden their perspectives. Additionally, it was appreciated to have a greater sense of respect and tolerance towards themselves and others. In addition, students expressed to be more confident English language users, as well as to be more interested and curious to understand English language diversity.

These findings provide important implications for the applied linguistics field, particularly the sociolinguistics factors that may intervene in the teaching of foreign languages. The teaching of English with a global perspective, in which linguistic varieties are seen as equally important can bring policymakers relevant insights for the development and adaptation of language curricula, as well as language planning and syllabus development. In addition, this study may also provide English language teachers from Expanding circles countries with pertinent data and resources to foster linguistic and cultural diversity among their students. As well as to prepare tolerant and respectful citizens. Regarding English learners, it is seen as vital to be prepared and equipped with the tools required to face the current challenges of the globalized world. Learning English with a global perspective may benefit students in different ways. Learners may become more informed about the current status of languages in the world and become effective communicators who respect and appreciate linguistic diversity and cultural differences.

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Fallos pragmáticos en rechazos producidos por aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera

Estefany Justo Hernández

Resumen

Los rechazos son interacciones que forman parte de la vida cotidiana. Estos, según Gass y Houck (1999), tienen lugar cuando un hablante no acepta una invitación, una sugerencia o una petición. Los rechazos pueden producirse de manera directa (‘*No, no puedo prestarte mi coche*’) o indirecta (‘*Lo siento, ¿qué te parece hacerlo otro día?*’). Es habitual que los aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera cometan fallos a la hora de realizar estos actos de habla (Edmonson y House, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Cohen, 2005), porque en ocasiones no tienen un alto nivel de competencia sociopragmática o pragmalingüística en el idioma extranjero. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo identificar el tipo de fallos pragmáticos que cometen los estudiantes al momento de rechazar. Asimismo, tiene como objetivo describir cómo los alumnos adaptan sus rechazos de acuerdo con variables contextuales tales como: poder social, distancia social e intensidad del acto de habla. Para obtener el corpus de esta investigación, se aplicaron cuestionarios en línea, a través de Google Forms, con situaciones para obtener rechazos en español e inglés, a adolescentes mexicanos estudiantes de inglés de nivel B1. Los resultados obtenidos muestran que los aprendices de inglés carecen de competencia pragmalingüística y no cuentan con una amplia variedad de recursos lingüísticos para rechazar en inglés como sí la tienen en su primera lengua.

Palabras clave: *actos de habla, rechazos, fallos pragmáticos, sociopragmático, pragmalingüístico, inglés.*

Introducción

Actualmente en México aprender inglés como lengua extranjera resulta indispensable por la presencia y utilidad de ese idioma en contextos educativos, laborales e incluso sociales. Es fundamental que los aprendices no sólo tengan competencia gramatical y buena pronunciación, sino que también sean competentes en los usos funcionales o pragmáticos de la lengua. En otras palabras, es importante que los aprendices posean competencia pragmática.

La competencia pragmática (Kasper, 1997) es el conocimiento que los hablantes poseen respecto a las normas socioculturales de una comunidad de habla. Esta competencia les permite a los aprendices de una lengua extranjera comprender, producir y adecuar diversos tipos de actos comunicativos dependiendo del contexto donde se encuentren.

Entre esos actos comunicativos se encuentran los actos de habla que Searle (1969) define como unidades mínimas de comunicación lingüística. Ejemplos de ellos son promesas, invitaciones, peticiones, amenazas, consejos o rechazos, siendo estos últimos actos de habla con gran relevancia en la vida cotidiana.

Los rechazos suceden cuando un hablante se niega a llevar a cabo un acto previamente iniciado o propuesto por otro hablante (Gass y Houck, 1999), como una invitación o una sugerencia. Los rechazos pueden ser directos (‘*No*’) o indirectos *(‘Tal vez para la próxima’)*, y las fórmulas semánticas de los mismos se componen de un acto principal y adjuntos tales como expresiones positivas (*‘Me encantaría, pero…’*) o expresiones de gratitud (*‘Gracias por tu invitación’*) (Beebe et al., 1990).

Los rechazos, por lo general, implican un alto nivel de complejidad y resultan desafiantes para los hablantes incluso cuando los llevan a cabo en su lengua materna (Chen, 1996, p. 23). Por tal motivo, al momento de producir un rechazo en una lengua extranjera la situación se vuelve aún más difícil (Beebe et al., 1990, p. 56; Wannaruck, 2008, p. 319; Salazar, 2009, p. 140).

De acuerdo con algunos autores (Edmonson y House, 1991, p. 284; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, p. 21; Cohen, 2005, p. 280), es frecuente que los estudiantes de una lengua extranjera cometan fallos pragmáticos al realizar actos de habla como rechazos. Los fallos pragmáticos ocurren cuando la fuerza pragmática que un hablante de una segunda lengua o lengua extranjera le asigna a una estructura lingüística es diferente a la que usarían los hablantes nativos en la misma situación (Thomas, 1983, p. 101).

La falta de conocimiento sociocultural es causa de uno de los tipos de fallos pragmáticos, los llamados *sociopragmáticos* (Thomas, 1983), pero no es la única. Los fallos también suceden porque los estudiantes no cuentan con los recursos lingüísticos necesarios en la lengua extranjera para llevar a cabo un acto de habla, este tipo de fallos se conoce como *pragmalingüísticos* (Thomas, 1983).

Algunos estudios sobre la producción de rechazos en inglés por hablantes nativos de distintas lenguas (Beebe et al., 1990; Tanck, 2002; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Wannaruck, 2008; Dermikol, 2016) han reportado fallos pragmáticos de distintos tipos. Partiendo de esos hallazgos, y tomando en cuenta el fenómeno antes mencionado, el presente estudio pretende investigar qué tipos de fallos pragmáticos cometen los aprendices mexicanos de inglés como lengua extranjera, de nivel B1 de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER), al rechazar. A su vez, con los objetivos específicos se espera:

Identificar qué ocasiona fallos pragmáticos en los rechazos producidos por aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Describir cómo los aprendices adecuan su producción de rechazos con respecto a variables contextuales como la distancia social, el poder social y el nivel de intensidad del acto de habla.

La hipótesis de esta investigación sustenta que los estudiantes no adecuarán su producción de rechazos en inglés dependiendo de las variables contextuales, sino que tenderán a generalizar el uso de las mismas estrategias en todos los contextos.

El estudio de la producción de rechazos en lengua extranjera es importante para observar si los aprendices de una lengua extranjera son conscientes de las variables sociales y culturales implicadas al rechazar tanto en su lengua materna como en la lengua meta. Además, también se puede evidenciar si los estudiantes cuentan con un repertorio de estrategias lingüísticas que les permita adaptar sus rechazos en diversas situaciones.

Finalmente, es importante señalar que el estudio de los actos de habla no sólo permite observar la manera en la que difiere la producción de actos de habla de estudiantes y hablantes nativos y así identificar rasgos pragmáticos que podrían considerarse universales. También permite encontrar evidencia de transferencia pragmática. De esta manera, una vez identificadas las áreas de oportunidad en la competencia pragmática de los estudiantes, se pueden diseñar programas de enseñanza donde se le dé más protagonismo al desarrollo de la competencia pragmática.

Fundamentos teóricos

Competencia pragmática

La competencia pragmática consiste en el conocimiento de reglas socioculturales que permiten producir e interpretar mensajes en una lengua específica (Flores Salgado, 2011, p. 1), esto con el fin de que los usuarios de una lengua logren una comunicación efectiva.

Kasper (1997) añade que la competencia pragmática brinda a los hablantes la capacidad de determinar qué tan apropiada es una producción lingüística en un contexto social determinado. Esta competencia también les permite participar en conversaciones, llevar a cabo actos de habla o producir discursos de distintos tipos (Kasper y Rose, 2001, p. 1).

Usó-Juan y Martínez-Flor (2008, p. 349-350) hacen hincapié en que, si los hablantes carecen de competencia pragmática, pueden darse problemas en la comunicación e incluso pueden surgir malentendidos con sus interlocutores. Si se trata de hablantes de una segunda lengua o lengua extranjera, el desarrollo de la competencia pragmática es un proceso más complejo y, según Taguchi (2012, p. 39), toma tiempo para lograrse.

Los estudiantes de una lengua extranjera o segunda lengua, especialmente los adultos, cuentan con una cantidad considerable de conocimiento pragmático universal; además, algunos aspectos pragmáticos de su lengua materna pueden emplearse en la lengua meta (Kasper y Rose, 2001, p. 4). Sin embargo, hay normas pragmáticas que son específicas de cada lengua y cultura, por ejemplo, las construcciones lingüísticas empleadas para los saludos. En español mexicano, la interrogante '*¿Cómo estás?*' se emplea como parte de un saludo cordial, un estudiante de español que no cuente con el suficiente conocimiento pragmático podría entender esa interrogante como una solicitud de información.

A pesar de que los estudiantes de una lengua extranjera tienen pocas oportunidades de exposición a la lengua meta, recibir instrucción explícita sobre la pragmática puede ayudarlos a desarrollar esta competencia (Kasper y Rose, 2001, p. 8; Niezgoda y Röver, 2001, p. 66)

Debido a que el estudio de la pragmática es un campo muy extenso, Leech (1983, p. 11) propone hacer una división de la pragmática general, en *sociopragmática* y *pragmalingüística*. La primera hace referencia a la forma en que los usuarios de la lengua evalúan los contextos donde se emplean los recursos lingüísticos (Taguchi, 2012, p. 2). Mientras que la pragmalingüística (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012, p. 153) estudia los recursos lingüísticos que tiene una lengua para llevar a cabo a cabo ilocuciones particulares. De esta forma, la competencia pragmática se divide en competencia sociopragmática y competencia pragmalingüística.

Competencia sociopragmática

La competencia sociopragmática es definida por Trosborg (1995, p. 11) como la capacidad de adecuar un significado, es decir, distinguir si un acto de habla se considera adecuado en una situación específica. Este tipo de competencia no se considera propia de la lengua, sino de la cultura (Infantidou y Scheneider, 2020, p. 3).

Los hablantes hacen uso de la competencia sociopragmática cuando adaptan sus producciones tomando en cuenta variables contextuales (Brown y Levinson, 1987, p. 244) como las que se presentan a continuación, ya que estas determinan qué tan adecuada es una producción lingüística en una situación y/o contexto en específico (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012, p. 153).

- *Poder social*: es el estatus del hablante con referencia al oyente (Usó-Juan y Martínez-Flor 2008, p. 253), por ejemplo, la relación jefe-empleado, profesor-estudiante, empleador-empleado, entre otras.
- *Distancia social*: se refiere al grado de familiaridad entre los interlocutores (Trosborg, 1995, p. 148), es decir si la relación es entre amigos cercanos, entre conocidos o entre extraños.

- *Nivel de imposición o de intensidad*: se relaciona con el tipo de exigencia por parte del hablante en cuanto a bienes o servicios por parte del oyente (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 17). En efecto, pedir un lápiz no tiene tanto impacto comparado con pedir una gran cantidad de dinero.

La transferencia positiva, es decir, el uso de normas pragmáticas de la lengua materna que coinciden en la lengua meta puede facilitar la adquisición de la competencia sociopragmática en estudiantes de una lengua extranjera (Kasper y Rose, 2001, p. 6).

Competencia pragmalingüística

La competencia pragmalingüística se define como la capacidad de utilizar recursos lingüísticos (intensificadores o mitigadores sintácticos y léxicos) y estrategias pragmáticas (franqueza, sinceridad) de una lengua en particular para llevar a cabo un acto comunicativo (Infantidou y Scheneider, 2020, p. 3)

Las diferencias que existen entre cada cultura hacen que las formas lingüísticas que se prefieran para realizar actos de habla sean distintas. Por ejemplo, Spencer-Oatey (2008, p. 43) ilustra que, en el caso de las disculpas, en una cultura se prefiere que los hablantes lo hagan brindando explicaciones a las partes ofendidas; mientras que en otra cultura basta asumir la parte de culpa que corresponde a quien hizo la ofensa.

Otra situación donde puede observarse esta competencia es en la elección de expresiones al momento de solicitar información o pedir una aclaración (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012, p. 90), las construcciones lingüísticas no serán las mismas si se envía un mensaje de texto a un amigo (‘*Oye, dime qué dejaron de tarea, por favor’*) que si se envía un correo electrónico a un profesor *(‘¿Sería tan amable de proporcionarme la próxima tarea que debe ser entregada?’*).

Tanto la competencia sociopragmática como la pragmalingüística son fundamentales para que los estudiantes logren comunicarse de manera apropiada (Tateyama, 2009, p. 134). Poseer ambos tipos de conocimiento les permite interactuar con los hablantes de la lengua meta de forma que no existan malentendidos o fallas en la comunicación.

Rechazos

Los rechazos son definidos como actos en los que un hablante se niega directa o indirectamente a aceptar una petición, una invitación o una sugerencia propuestos por otro hablante (Tanck, 2002, p. 2; Krulatz y Dixon, 2020, p. 752). Los rechazos son considerados actos de habla poco preferidos por los hablantes (Salazar Campillo, 2009, p. 140). Por su naturaleza amenazante (Dermikol, 2019, p. 202), implican llevar a cabo negociaciones y usar estrategias para atenuar su impacto, ya que un rechazo siempre contradice las expectativas de un hablante (García, 2007, p. 551).

Para los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras, los rechazos pueden significar todo un reto porque implican apoyarse en estrategias para negociar o mitigar las negativas, con el fin de no ofender a los interlocutores (Chen, 1996, p. 8). La mayor parte de las veces, las estrategias para rechazar son específicas de cada cultura.

Una condición fundamental señalada por Gass y Houck (1999, p. 10) y Vanderveken (1990, p. 185) para que un acto se considere rechazo es que dicho acto debe producirse directamente después de una solicitud, una invitación, una oferta o una sugerencia. En comparación con actos de habla como saludos y despedidas, que son de manera formulada y rutinaria, un rechazo depende mucho del contexto (Chen, 1996, p. 9) y toma en cuenta la influencia de variables contextuales y socioculturales como el poder social, la distancia social y el nivel de intensidad del rechazo (Wannaruck, 2008, p. 319).

Estructura de los rechazos

Siguiendo la proposición de Blum-Kulka y Olshtain (1984, p. 201), las unidades que constituyen un rechazo se presentan en forma de distintas estrategias. Asimismo, se puede identificar un acto principal o núcleo, unidad con la fuerza ilocutiva para actuar como rechazo, y adjuntos, unidades opcionales que no influyen en la fuerza ilocutiva (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 42-43).

Dado que los rechazos reflejan normas culturales, las estrategias para realizarlos suelen variar de acuerdo con la cultura donde se produzcan, por tal motivo existe más de una clasificación de posibles estrategias empleadas al rechazar. Sin embargo, en lo que los autores están de acuerdo (Rubin, 1983, Beebe et al., 1990, Félix-Brasdefer, 2004, Salazar Campillo et al. 2009, Dermikol, 2016) es en establecer como acto principal del rechazo dos categorías generales de estrategias: directas e indirectas (ver Tabla 1), que a su vez se componen de otras subestrategias.

Una estrategia directa es aquella que, en palabras de Félix-Brasdefer (2008) "se expresa con precisión y claridad" (p. 42-43), por ejemplo: '*No*' o '*No puedo*'. Las estrategias indirectas, como las excusas '*Ese día tengo un compromiso*', se componen de más pistas contextuales, lo que da como resultado que sean más extensas que las estrategias directas (Taguchi y Yamaguchi, 2019, p. 35).

Tipo de estrategia	Tipo de subestrategia	Ejemplo
Directas	Negación simple	'*No*'.
	Negación de una proposición	'*No puedo*'.
Indirectas	Rechazos mitigados	'*No creo poder ir contigo*'.
	Razón/explicación	'*Ya quedé con mi familia y no puedo faltar*'.
	Respuesta indefinida	'*Intentaré ver si te puedo prestar mi coche, pero no te lo aseguro*'.
	Disculpa	'*Lo siento*', '*disculpa*', '*perdón*'.
	Alternativa	'*Voy a ocupar ese libro, pero te presto otro*'.
	Posposición	'*¿Te parece si lo dejamos para la siguiente semana?*'.
	Repetición	'*¿Este fin de semana?*'.
	Solicitud de información	'*¿Como cuánto tiempo usarías el coche?*'.
	Hablar de una aceptación en el pasado	'*Si me lo hubieras pedido ayer hubiera cambiado mis planes*'.
	Deseo	'*Quisiera poder prestártelo*'.

Tabla 1. Estrategias y subestrategias empleadas en rechazos, propuestas por Félix-Brasdefer (2004).

Las estrategias de rechazo ya sean directas o indirectas, frecuentemente se acompañan de modificadores internos, ubicados dentro del núcleo del rechazo (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 39) o modificadores externos, ubicados fuera del núcleo (adjuntos) (ver Tabla 2).

Modificadores		
Modificadores internos	Mitigación léxica	Adverbios: *'Tal vez'*, *'probablemente'*, *'a lo mejor'*. Predicados de estado mental: *'Pienso'*, *'siento'*, *'creo'*, *'me parece'*. Diminutivos: *'Te puedo prestar el libro en un ratito mientras hago otra tarea'*. Palabras amigables: *'Disculpa, hermano'*. Marcadores de discurso: *'Este, no estoy segura de poder prestártelo'*, *'Híjole, ese día se me complica mucho'*.
	Mitigación sintáctica	Condicionales: *'Si pudiera, iría con mucho gusto pero…'* Preguntas etiqueta: *'Lo dejamos para el otro lunes, ¿sí?'*
Modificadores externos	Adjuntos	Opinión positiva: *'Suena genial, pero…'* Disponibilidad: *'Me gustaría acompañarte, pero…'* Gratitud / apreciación: *'Aprecio que me haya tomado en cuenta, pero…'* Empatía: *'Entiendo que es un concurso importante, pero…'* Solicitud de aclaración: *'Luego nos ponemos de acuerdo, ¿qué piensas?'*

Tabla 2. Modificadores internos y externos de rechazos propuestos por Félix-Brasdefer (2004) con adaptaciones.

Fallos pragmáticos

Se le llama fallos pragmáticos a los fallos ocurridos cuando una expresión pragmática no alcanza la intención esperada por un hablante (Thomas, 1983, p. 84). De acuerdo con Trosborg (1995, p. 55), los fallos pragmáticos son resultado de sobregeneralizaciones, simplificaciones o reducciones de las normas pragmáticas en la lengua meta.

Fallos sociopragmáticos

Los fallos sociopragmáticos se relacionan con variables socioculturales de la lengua, y surgen debido a la concepción equivocada de poder social y distancia social con respecto a un hablante, así como a la concepción equivocada del nivel de imposición implicado en un acto de habla (Thomas, 1984, p. 226).

Por ejemplo, Thomas (1983, p. 105) explica que frecuentemente los profesores suelen tener un estatus social más alto que los estudiantes y su relación social suele ser distante. Es por eso por lo que, al dirigirse a un profesor, se esperaría que los estudiantes de una lengua extranjera adecuaran sus producciones tomando en cuenta las variables de poder social y distancia social.

Sin embargo, los fallos sociopragmáticos también pueden darse entre interlocutores que comparten un bajo nivel de distancia social. Por ejemplo, Freytag (2020) menciona que la siguiente petición *'¿Podría ser tan amable de decirme si utilicé la dirección de correo electrónico correcta?'* evidenciaría un fallo sociopragmático y se consideraría como una producción inapropiada por ser demasiado cortés en un contexto donde la relación del hablante y su interlocutor es cercana.

Debido a su naturaleza sociocultural, Wannaruck (2008, p. 319) sugiere que los fallos sociopragmáticos son considerados más graves que los fallos gramaticales. Si un hablante comete un error gramatical, suele ser percibido como menos competente en la lengua meta. En cambio, si el fallo es de naturaleza sociopragmática, el hablante puede ser percibido como descortés, irrespetuoso o grosero.

Fallos pragmalingüísticos

Esta clase de fallos, según Chen (1996, p. 24), ocurren cuando los aprendices de una lengua usan una estructura de su lengua materna para llevar a cabo un acto de habla en la lengua meta. Alba De Diego (1994, p. 414) sostiene que una fórmula lingüística por sí misma no puede ser considerada cortés o descortés, sino que, son las condiciones contextuales y socioculturales las que determinan cómo deben percibirse dichas producciones.

Cohen (2005, p. 280) comenta que la falta de conocimiento sobre las normas pragmáticas de la comunidad de la lengua meta provoca que los aprendices de una segunda lengua no usen estrategias de la lengua meta, sino que se limiten a traducir lo que dirían en su lengua materna. Esto da como resultado que su producción resulte inadecuada para el contexto de la lengua meta.

La investigación de Beebe et al. (1990, p. 66) es un ejemplo de las normas lingüísticas y socioculturales del japonés como lengua materna en el inglés como segunda lengua. Cuando los hablantes japoneses aprendices de inglés rechazaban una invitación, sus producciones contenían excusas inespecíficas '*Tengo que ir a Europa pronto*', '*Mis hijos tienen muchos problemas*', como suele suceder en rechazos de japonés como lengua materna.

Otro ejemplo de fallo pragmalingüístico en español sería cuando un hablante pregunta: '*¿Por qué no cierras la ventana?*', esta una forma educada de solicitar que alguien realice una acción, pero un hablante no nativo de español que no posea la suficiente competencia pragmática puede llegar a interpretarla como una solicitud de información antes que como una solicitud de acción (Wolfson, 1986, p. 16).

Cohen (2005, p. 280) añade que la sobregeneralización de patrones de actos de habla es otro caso donde se pueden observar fallos pragmalingüísticos. A menudo, los aprendices de una lengua extranjera tienden a emplear patrones inapropiados para un determinado contexto. Por ejemplo, emplear en exceso el modal *have to*, en lugar de usar otros modales como *ought to*, *need, should,* etc.

Metodología

Descripción del estudio

El presente estudio es una investigación de tipo cualitativa que tiene por objetivo dar evidencia de fallos pragmáticos realizados por estudiantes mexicanos de inglés (de nivel B1 de acuerdo con el MCER) como lengua extranjera al rechazar en la lengua meta.

Población

La población del estudio se compone de un total de 22 participantes de entre 14 y 15 años; 12 de ellos hablantes nativos de español mexicano y 10 de ellos hablantes nativos de español estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los participantes son estudiantes de Proulex[1], de los planteles *Tecnológico* y *La Paz*.

Al momento de aplicar el instrumento, los estudiantes contaban con el nivel B1 de inglés, con respecto al *MCER*[2], que se compone de un total de 40 horas de instrucción en un periodo de 2 meses. Es importante mencionar que para esta investigación no se tomaron en cuenta variables como sexo, conocimiento de otras lenguas además del inglés o el haber vivido o visitado alguna comunidad angloparlante.

Instrumentos

Para la recolección de datos se emplearon 8 pruebas de finalización del discurso (originalmente propuestas por Blum-Kulka y Olshtain, 1984); 4 en inglés y 4 en español. En estas pruebas los participantes reciben una descripción de una situación en la que se requiere que proporcionen una respuesta de acuerdo con lo que dirían en la situación dada (Gass y Selinker, 2008, p. 84). Mediante este instrumento, es posible controlar variables como poder social, estatus social, distancia social, grado de imposición, entre otras (Flores Salgado, 2011, p. 23; Taguchi y Yamaguchi, 2019). Las pruebas utilizadas en esta investigación no están basadas en estudios anteriores, sino que fueron diseñadas tomando en cuenta el entorno sociocultural de los participantes, es decir se concibieron situaciones a las que se pueden enfrentar en la vida cotidiana.

Se comparó la producción en ambos idiomas para observar si los fallos pragmáticos sólo suceden en la lengua meta. Ninguna de las pruebas contenía

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[1] Proulex es una academia particular de enseñanza de idiomas en el estado de Jalisco, México.

[2] De acuerdo con el MCER, se espera que en la lengua extranjera los estudiantes de nivel B1 sean capaces de describir experiencias, eventos, explicar razones, dar opiniones o compartir sus planes personales (www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale).

explícitamente la instrucción de rechazar, esto con el fin de no influir en el acto de habla que los estudiantes elegirían.

Para responder las pruebas, se les proporcionó a los participantes un enlace para acceder a la plataforma de *Google Forms*. Antes de presentar las pruebas de finalización, en la encuesta se les informó a los estudiantes que su participación en dicha encuesta era con el propósito de estudiar el uso del español/inglés en diferentes contextos, no se les explicó el objetivo real de la investigación para no influenciar su desempeño. En cuanto a las variables en las tareas de finalización del discurso, en ambas lenguas fueron las siguientes: *poder social* (Igual =, Mayor +), *distancia social* (Conocido -, Desconocido+) y *nivel de intensidad del acto de habla* (Bajo-, Alto+).

A continuación, se ejemplifica cómo se presentaron las pruebas de finalización a los estudiantes en inglés y español respectivamente:

> S4-EN. One of your friends asks to borrow your car to pick up a relative at the airport. You can't lend it to him because you need your car to attend a meeting in a place far from your home. What are the exact words that you would say to your friend?
> S4-ES. Uno de tus amigos te pide prestado tu coche para ir por un familiar al aeropuerto. Tú no puedes prestárselo porque necesitas el coche para asistir a una reunión en lugar lejos de tu casa. ¿Cuáles son las palabras exactas que le dirías a tu amigo?

Procedimiento de análisis

Para el análisis de los rechazos, la clasificación empleada está basada en el trabajo de Félix-Brasdefer (2004), que a su vez es una adaptación de Beebe et al. (1990). La primera parte del análisis consistió en establecer las unidades consideradas como los núcleos de los rechazos, en inglés y en español.

Posteriormente, se utilizó el software *Atlas.ti versión 9.1.3.0* para etiquetar el tipo de estrategia principal de cada acto de habla y clasificarla de acuerdo con la taxonomía de rechazos. Una vez establecidas las estrategias y subestrategias, se siguió el mismo procedimiento para analizar y clasificar los adjuntos de los rechazos.

La siguiente etapa consistió en el conteo de la frecuencia, así como el cálculo de porcentajes de las estrategias, subestrategias, modificadores y adjuntos a través del software *Spss versión 27*. Finalmente, se procedió al análisis lingüístico de los recursos empleados.

Análisis y resultados

En el siguiente apartado se presentan las ocurrencias y el porcentaje de estrategias y subestrategias, así como los recursos lingüísticos que los estudiantes emplearon para rechazar en las diversas situaciones presentadas.

Estrategias

La producción de rechazos tanto en inglés como en español demuestra una preferencia por las estrategias indirectas con un 50% (n=10) en comparación con las estrategias directas con un 45%. Pero también se observaron otro tipo de estrategias (5%) que no estaban incluidas en la taxonomía de análisis.

En las estrategias directas explícitamente se menciona que el hablante no es capaz o no desea aceptar una sugerencia, una invitación o llevar a cabo una petición, como se puede ver en el siguiente caso:

1. ‘*Sorry dude, but I wont be able to borrow my car to you, I have to attend a meeting far from here’ (S4-EI-2)*[3]

Por su parte las estrategias indirectas no incluyen explícitamente una negación:

2. *‘Sorry man, but Im going to need it to, I could borrow it after that if you want to’ (S4-EI-1)*

Por su parte, en español, el total de estrategias directas empleadas (47.9 %) (n=12) fue menor que el de estrategias indirectas (50%). También pudieron observarse otro tipo de estrategias (2.1%) no mencionadas en la taxonomía para análisis.

[3] Situación 4, estudiante de inglés 2.

A continuación, se presentan ejemplos de rechazos en español producidos mediante una estrategia directa (3) e indirecta (4), respectivamente.

3. '*No puedo bro, lo necesito. Pero con gusto te hago paro con un Uber!!' (S4-HE-2)*[4]
4. '*Lo siento pero lo necesito tal vez la próxima' (S4-HE-1)*

Subestrategias

Las subestrategias empleadas para rechazar en inglés consistieron en 3 tipos diferentes: negación simple, negación de una proposición y razones/explicaciones, siendo estas últimas las más frecuentes (50%). Este tipo de estrategias se llevaron a cabo principalmente mediante dos verbos: *need* y *have*. Tanto *need* como *have* se emplearon mayormente en tiempo presente simple y únicamente con la primera persona del singular. Sin embargo, *need* también se acompañó de auxiliares de tiempo futuro como *will* (5) y *going to.*

5. '*Sorry but i will need it'* (S4-EI-4)

Las segundas subestrategias más frecuentes (37.5%) fueron las negaciones de proposiciones, en estas se menciona explícitamente la incapacidad del hablante para llevar a cabo una actividad. Las estructuras sintácticas empleadas para negar una proposición consistieron mayormente en oraciones con el modal *can* en forma negativa, en tiempo presente (6).

6. '*Teacher I'm so grateful but I can't, I have a presentation the same day and I can't be absent, but I have a friend that can goes on my place.'* (S7-EI-1)

En menor medida se recurrió al modal *will* en forma negativa (7). Ambos modales se conjugaron en primera persona del singular para expresar claramente la incapacidad del hablante de llevar a cabo la petición.

[4] Situación 4, hablante de español 2.

7. ‘*Sorry dude, but I wont be able to borrow my car to you, I have to attend a meeting far from here’* (S4-EI-1)

El tercer tipo de subestrategia más frecuente en inglés fue la negación simple con un 7.5%. Como su nombre lo expresa, este tipo de negación es una expresión impersonal, que consiste únicamente del adverbio *no* al inicio del rechazo, sin embargo, suele acompanarse de más elementos atenuantes, como disculpas mediante la expresión *sorry.*

8. ‘*No sorry, I´ll go far from my home so I´ll need it.’* (S4-EI-9)

Las subestrategias restantes se consideran en la categoría otros debido a que no están contempladas dentro de la taxonomía empleada para el análisis (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008). Una de ellas consistió en aceptar la petición a cambio de un favor por parte del solicitante.

9. ‘*You Can take it, but i Will need you to send my a report when you finished it, it's for my class’* (S8-EI-4)

La otra subestrategia observada que tampoco se incluye en la taxonomía, se trata de una malinterpretación del acto de habla esperado por parte del hablante. En lugar de producir un rechazo, se llevó a cabo una petición.

10. ‘*hey friend that book I'm also going to need it but because I have to make a report on it and I need it you could lend it to me please’* (S8-EI-8)

En español, por otro lado, el total de subestrategias distintas utilizadas fue de 5: negación simple, negación de una proposición, rechazos mitigados, razones/explicaciones y posposiciones.

Las razones/explicaciones se encuentran en el primer lugar de frecuencia con 41.7% y la mayoría de estas se produjeron mediante los verbos *necesitar*, *tener* y *tener que*. Cabe aclarar que es necesaria una distinción entre razones/explicaciones con *tener + sustantivo*, como posesión, (11) y *tener + que* seguidas de verbos, expresando obligación (12).

11. '*Discúlpeme mucho profesor, pero ese día tengo una exposición muy importante de otra materia y no puedo faltar porque afectaría gravemente a mi calificación. Me gustaría mucho ir, pero de verdad no puedo.'* (S7-HE-6)

12. *'NO... No puede ser! Moría por esta oportunidad de verdad, y pero ese día tengo que hacer esto y el otro. Cielos no lo puedo creer! Chale! Gracias de todos modos. Una disculpa.'* (S7-HE-2)

La mayor parte de las razones/explicaciones contienen los verbos en presente simple en modo indicativo (*necesito, tengo*), aunque también se observan ocurrencias del verbo *necesitar* conjugado en futuro simple (*necesitaré*). Tanto el uso de *necesitar* como *tener*, o *tener que* se conjugaron con la primera persona del singular, sin embargo, este se incluye de forma tácita, fenómeno muy común en español, ya que en ningún rechazo en español, ningún verbo se acompañó del pronombre *yo.*

Por último, las razones/explicaciones restantes consistieron en otro tipo de estructuras sintácticas, como afirmaciones en presente simple, por ejemplo, la siguiente:

13. '*Lo haría con muchísimo gusto, pero mi coche está en reparación, y el mecánico me ha dicho que su reparación será tardará unas semanas'* (S4-HE-11)

Los verbos empleados para dar explicaciones/razones en inglés son los mismos que en español; por lo tanto, puede decirse que los aprendices se basan en los recursos que conocen en la lengua materna para rechazar en la lengua meta. No obstante, sólo en español se observa una diferencia entre el uso del verbo *tener* como posesión y *tener* como obligación.

Con un 35.4% la negación de una proposición es el segundo tipo de estrategia más usado en español. Estas subestrategias se llevaron a cabo mediante el verbo *poder*. Sin embargo, la conjugación de este verbo fue en primera persona del singular, de dos formas distintas. La más predominante fue en presente simple, modo indicativo y, en segundo lugar, en futuro simple (14).

14. ‘*Tendré tareas escolares por hacer esta noche, no podré ir, quizá otro día si!’ (S5-HE-7)*

En tercer lugar de frecuencia, están las negaciones simples con 10.4%; mientras que en español sólo se empleó el adverbio *no* al inicio del rechazo, sin ningún otro tipo de modificación atenuante.

15. ‘*No, lo siento pero ya tengo planes’* (S5-HE-1)

Los rechazos mitigados son una subestrategia observada con menos frecuencia (6.3%) y únicamente en la lengua materna. Respecto a las fórmulas sintácticas para estas, no hay un solo verbo o modal que se haya empleado en todas las ocurrencias, pero sí se observó el uso del tiempo futuro mediante perífrasis del modal *poder + ir* (16).

16. ‘*Disculpa amigo, pero no creo poder ir, tengo un compromiso pendiente’* (S5-HE-8)

Un último tipo de subestrategia para rechazar fue la posposición. Utilizada sólo en español, esta subestrategia se realizó por medio de una orientación hablante-oyente, con el modal *poder* en forma condicional (17).

17. ‘*Perdona pero ya tengo planes, pero podríamos salir la siguiente semana ¿Te parece?’* (S5-HE-9)

Por su parte, las subestrategias que no se observan dentro de la clasificación corresponden a un acto de habla equivocado, específicamente una solicitud (18) y a una aceptación (19). En el caso de la aceptación, no se considera una posposición u otra subestrategia de rechazo porque el hablante responde un *sí* de manera explícita.

18. ‘*Profesor, estoy formando parte del concurso de matemáticas y no puedo estar en la exposición, si quiere le muestro comprobante, ¿podría exponer otro día?.’* (S7-HE-5)

19. ‘*Si claro, nada más dame chance de terminas este proyecto y te aviso para que vengas por el.’* (S8-HE-2)

Modificadores internos

Los rechazos incluyen modificadores internos o externos con el fin de atenuar el acto de habla. En inglés, los modificadores internos observados fueron vocativos amigables, adverbios y marcadores del discurso. Sin embargo, también se observaron otros tipos de mitigadores léxicos no contemplados en la taxonomía para el análisis.

La variedad de adverbios empleados fue nula, ya que en todas las ocurrencias sólo se observó el uso de *maybe*. Los vocativos amigables como: *dude, friend, man,* sí resultaron un poco más variados. Por último, en los marcadores de discurso sucedió lo mismo que en los adverbios, se empleó el mismo, *oh*, en todos los casos.

Respecto al tipo de mitigadores no contemplados en la taxonomía, estos son alertadores, específicamente refiriendo al rol desempeñado por el interlocutor, como *teacher*:

20. ‘*Teacher I would love to go but I can't, I already have something to do that day’* (S7-EI-4)

En la mayoría de los rechazos se utilizó sólo un mitigador a la vez. Fueron pocos casos donde los aprendices sí combinaron 2 tipos de mitigación (marcador de discurso y roles) dentro del mismo rechazo (21).

21. *‘Oh sorry teacher but i cant, i need to give a presentation in a class, im so sorry’* (S7-EI-3)

En español, los tipos de mitigadores léxicos fueron 5 en total; adverbios, predicados de estado mental, vocativos amigables y marcadores de discurso. Los adverbios fueron de dos tipos, *tal vez* y *quizás*. Mientras que los predicados de estado mental consistieron en dos expresiones distintas *‘me temo que lo necesitaré’* y *‘no creo poder ir’*.

22. *‘Lo haría con mucho gusto, pero me temo lo necesitaré... Espero lo entiendas’* (S4-HE-7)

23. *‘Disculpa amigo, pero no creo poder ir, tengo un compromiso pendiente’* (S5-HE-8)

Los vocativos amigables consistieron en 4 distintos, 2 de ellos apócopes: *bro* y *profe*. Llama la atención que en los rechazos en español se usaron apocopes de palabras en inglés, mientras que en los rechazos en inglés no hubo presencia de ninguna palabra o frase en la lengua materna. Los vocativos amigables restantes son expresiones comunes para expresar afecto: *viejo,* y *hermano.* Por su parte, los marcadores de discurso fueron los siguientes: *chale, híjole,* y *mira.*

Al igual que en los rechazos en inglés, también se emplearon mitigadores que no estaban contemplados en la taxonomía de análisis, estas son expresiones con los roles que desempeñan los interlocutores (24).

24. *‘Disculpe maestro pero me temo que no podré asistir ya que tengo un compromiso pendiente’* S7-HE-8)

Finalmente, los mitigadores sintácticos sólo tuvieron una ocurrencia, y esta se trató de etiquetas (25).

25. ‘Viejo, te voy a quedar mal, tengo otra cita! Hagamos algo, te invito yo la próxima vez nada más te digo con tiempo. Va?’ (S5-HE-2)

Modificadores externos

Los modificadores externos, o adjuntos, se encuentran antes o después de los núcleos de los rechazos y se consideran elementos opcionales puesto que no modifican ni interfieren con la fuerza ilocutiva del rechazo. En inglés, los modificadores empleados incluyen expresiones de disponibilidad y de gratitud. Para las expresiones de disponibilidad, se utilizó el auxiliar *would* seguido del verbo *like*, conjugado en primera persona del singular (26).

26. '*I would like to go ant compete, but I have to give a presentation that I cant miss, so I wont be able to do it, thanks for the invitation'* (S7-EI-1)

Mientras que las expresiones de gratitud se realizaron usando el verbo *thank* en presente simple, pero también se llevaron a cabo mediante otros recursos, como adjetivos (27).

27. '*Teacher I'm so grateful but I can't I have a presentation the same day and I can't be absent, but I have a friend that can goes on my place.'* (S7-EI-2)

Por su parte, en español, los adjuntos consistieron en 4 tipos distintos: opiniones positivas, expresiones de disponibilidad, expresiones de gratitud/apreciación y solicitudes de aclaración.

Las expresiones positivas en español no incluyen un solo tipo de verbos o de fórmulas sintácticas, sino que se tratan de expresiones donde el hablante, a pesar de rechazar, muestra interés en lo que se le ofrece (28).

28. '*NO... No puede ser! Moría por esta oportunidad de verdad, y pero ese día tengo que hacer esto y el otro. Cielos no lo puedo creer! Chale! Gracias de todos modos. Una disculpa.'* (S7-HE-2)

Las expresiones de disponibilidad se realizaron mediante condicionales que reflejaban entusiasmo por parte del hablante (29). Mientras que las expresiones de gratitud/apreciación, se produjeron mediante verbos como *agradecer* o *apreciar* conjugados en presente simple en modo indicativo (30).

29. '*Lo haría con muchísimo gusto, pero mi coche está en reparación, y el mecánico me ha dicho que su reparación será tardará unas semanas' (S4-HE-11)*

30. '*Realmente aprecio muchísimo la invitación, pero me temo que no podré participar, dado que me he postulado para un trabajo muy importante y justo ese día será mi entrevista,' (S7-HE-11)*

Por último, las solicitudes de aclaración incluyeron preguntas de tipo abiertas, donde se pide información sobre el punto de vista del interlocutor (31).

31. '*Una disculpa hermano, pero tengo un compromiso con mi familia y no puedo ir contigo, dejémoslo para después ¿Que te parece?' (S5-HE-3)*

Además de los adjuntos analizados con base en la taxonomía de análisis, se pudo observar que los rechazos incluyeron otro tipo de adjuntos antes o después del núcleo, y en muchos casos se usaron dos o más dentro de un mismo rechazo. Lo que resulta interesante es que estos adjuntos también son subestrategias que pueden emplearse por sí mismas para rechazar. Sin embargo, no se consideraron como la subestrategia principal porque los rechazos incluían una negación de manera más o menos explícita.

El primer tipo de adjuntos no contemplados fueron disculpas, mayormente utilizadas al principio de los rechazos y producidas mediante la expresión *sorry* y, en ocasiones, acompañadas del verbo *be* conjugado en presente en primera persona del singular (32).

32. '*I'm sorry but I can't lend you my car, I need to transport to a meet, but you can use an Uber.' (S4-EI-2)*

Las explicaciones fueron otro tipo de adjuntos empleados. En muchos casos, como el siguiente, las razones/explicaciones se acompañaron también de disculpas.

33. ‘*No sorry, I´ll go far from my home so I´ll need it.*’ *(S4-EI-9)*

Finalmente, las alternativas también se usaron junto con otro tipo de adjuntos. A diferencia de otras, estas funcionaron como post-rechazo (34), es decir, se ubicaron después de la subestrategia principal.

34. ‘*I really sorry, but I can't go because I have plans with my family tonight, maybe another day.’ (S5-EI-6)*

En español, también fueron 3 los tipos de adjuntos no contemplados en la clasificación para análisis: disculpas, razones/explicaciones y alternativas. Las disculpas mediante expresiones impersonales, es decir, sin orientarse hacia el hablante (*perdóname*) se ubicaron antes de la subestrategia principal de rechazo (35).

35. ‘*Perdón pero yo también lo necesito para hacer una tarea lo siento no te lo puedo prestar’ (S8-HE-10)*

Las explicaciones en su mayoría se emplearon después del núcleo del rechazo, pero en algunos casos se utilizaron al principio y también se observaron acompañadas de expresiones de disculpa o perdón.

36. ‘*¿Perdona pero ya tengo planes, pero podríamos salir la siguiente semana ¿Te parece?’ (S5-HE-9)*

Las alternativas se utilizaron al final de las subestrategias principales (37) y, en todos los casos. ocurrieron junto con disculpas o explicaciones.

37. ‘*Ah, me agarraste desprevenida, hoy ya tengo cosas que hacer con mi familia y lo llevamos planeando hace tiempo así que no puedo faltar. Pero si quieres podemos ir otro día en el que ambos podamos.’ (S5-HE-6)*

Uso de estrategias y subestrategias de acuerdo con las variables contextuales

En todas las situaciones de rechazos se incluyeron variables contextuales como lo son poder social, distancia social e intensidad del rechazo. La variable de poder social incluía tanto relaciones simétricas como asimétricas. En las primeras, los hablantes se encontraban en el mismo estatus de poder social que sus interlocutores, por ejemplo, se trataba de amigos cercanos. En las situaciones de poder social mayor, los interlocutores se encuentran en un estatus de poder superior al de los hablantes, específicamente tienen el rol de profesores.

La variable de distancia social puede ser menor o mayor. En el primer caso, ilustra una relación cercana, de amistad, entre el hablante y su interlocutor independientemente de sus estatus sociales. El segundo caso involucra interacciones donde el hablante y el interlocutor no son cercanos, esto sin tomar en cuenta el estatus de ambos y sus relaciones son de colegas poco conocidos o de alumno-profesor.

El nivel de intensidad de los rechazos fue la última variable analizada. Esta se relaciona con el costo que implica el rechazo, por ejemplo, es diferente rechazar una invitación al cine que una invitación a participar en un evento importante.

Las estrategias directas se emplearon con mayor recurrencia en situaciones de poder social mayor, intensidad mayor; mientras que, en situaciones con distancia social mayor, se observa el mismo porcentaje de uso que con las estrategias indirectas.

Dentro de las subestrategias directas utilizadas por los aprendices, se encuentran las negaciones simples y las negaciones de proposiciones. Las primeras se utilizaron en rechazos donde el poder social era igual, la distancia menor y la intensidad mayor. Este resultado contrasta con el obtenido por Wannaruck (2008), en cuyo estudio las negaciones simples sólo se emplearon en situaciones de poder social menor.

Las negaciones de proposiciones fueron más frecuentes con las variables de poder social mayor, distancia social mayor e intensidad mayor. Aunque dichas subestrategias contienen un nivel de franqueza alto, siguen considerándose menos directas y más corteses que las negaciones simples (Wannaruck, 2008).

Respecto a las estrategias indirectas, estas se presentaron junto con las siguientes variables: poder social igual, distancia social menor, intensidad menor y distancia social mayor, aunque en esta última hubo un empate con las estrategias directas.

El uso de las razones/explicaciones como la principal subestrategia empleada es similar a los resultados de otros estudios (Beebe et al., 1990; Wannaruck; Dermikol 2016). No obstante, en menor medida, los aprendices de inglés también hicieron uso de rechazos mitigados y posposiciones, pero este resultado no es parecido a aquellos obtenidos en otros estudios similares.

Con base en los resultados anteriores, puede decirse que tanto en inglés como en español se recurrió con más frecuencia a estrategias y subestrategias indirectas. Respecto a estas últimas, las que predominaron fueron las razones/explicaciones.

Si bien los aprendices de inglés utilizaron algunas subestrategias distintas a las que utilizaron los hablantes en la lengua materna, sí se pudo observar una sobre generalización por las razones/explicaciones a pesar de que los contextos de los rechazos involucraban distintos niveles en las variables contextuales. La sobregeneralización puede explicarse a partir de que los aprendices se sirven de recursos lingüísticos en su lengua materna debido a que no están acostumbrados a utilizar tales recursos en actos de habla en la lengua meta o ni siquiera cuentan con el conocimiento de estos.

Conclusiones

Esta investigación tenía como objetivo identificar los tipos de fallos pragmáticos (sociopragmáticos o pragmalingüísticos) cometidos por aprendices de inglés de nivel B1, al rechazar. También pretendía describir cómo los aprendices adecuan su producción tomando en cuenta las variables de poder social, distancia social e intensidad del acto de habla.

La hipótesis propuesta establecía que los estudiantes no adecuarían su producción de rechazos con respecto a las variables contextuales, sino que generalizarían el uso de las mismas estrategias, cometiendo así fallos pragmalingüísticos. Sin embargo, vale la pena discutir los principales hallazgos.

En cuanto a los fallos encontrados en rechazos, estos también fueron de tipo pragmalingüístico porque los aprendices generalizaron el uso de los mismos recursos lingüísticos sin importar las diferentes variables contextuales.

Los fallos observados en los rechazos pueden explicarse por la falta de conocimiento de recursos lingüísticos en la lengua meta o por la falta de práctica de los mismos en distintos tipos de situaciones. Debido a que los aprendices cuentan con más experiencia rechazando en español, se hace evidente que recurren a formas lingüísticas en su lengua nativa para rechazar en inglés, este resultado concuerda con los resultados obtenidos por Beebe et al. (1990) y Wannaruck (2008) donde se observó una fuerte influencia de la lengua materna en los rechazos en inglés.

Por su parte, en la adecuación de rechazos con respecto a las variables contextuales, se observó que las estrategias con más ocurrencias en todas las situaciones fueron las indirectas, seguidas de las directas, y también pudieron observarse otro tipo de estrategias. Estas últimas correspondieron a actos de habla distintos a los esperados y también son un reflejo de fallos pragmalingüísticos, ya que los hablantes no lograron comprender lo que se les pedía producir.

Respecto a las subestrategias, las más utilizadas fueron indirectas, específicamente razones o explicaciones. Sin embargo, no en todas las situaciones se prefirió el uso de razones/explicaciones; en algunos casos, otras subestrategias como negaciones de proposiciones predominaron más. Esto demuestra que, aunque, en general, se prefieren las razones/explicaciones, los aprendices también hacen uso de otro tipo de subestrategias y adecuan sus rechazos en diferentes situaciones.

Finalmente, los modificadores internos y externos también reflejan transferencia de la lengua materna en la lengua meta, debido a que los recursos lingüísticos que se emplean en español se observan también en inglés.

Se espera que los resultados del presente estudio logren contribuir a la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en México. Primeramente, la contribución implicaría hacer que se reconozca la importancia del desarrollo de la competencia pragmática en los estudiantes.

En segundo lugar, y a falta de un entorno donde la lengua extranjera es hablada, la inclusión de contenidos y actividades que permitan a los estudiantes desarrollar su competencia pragmática puede ayudar a reducir los fallos pragmáticos que se cometen en inglés.

Como tercer punto, pueden crearse instrumentos que permitan evaluar la competencia pragmática de los aprendices y que se adapten de mejor manera al contexto de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera.

Una de las principales limitaciones al realizar este estudio fue la dificultad de aplicar el instrumento de una manera más orgánica, como lo pudo haber sido aplicarlas personalmente. Además, la naturaleza escrita del mismo pudo haber influido en los resultados obtenidos. Como Bowe (2014, p. 88) reconoce, las pruebas de finalización del discurso suelen reflejar cómo los hablantes podrían hacer uso de su conocimiento lingüístico y no cómo lo usan realmente en sus interacciones.

Por lo tanto, futuros estudios que se enfoquen en analizar los fallos pragmáticos de los aprendices de inglés pueden emplear instrumentos donde la participación de los hablantes sea más cercana a las interacciones de la vida cotidiana. Otro aspecto que se podría mejorar es la aplicación del instrumento a una muestra más amplia de estudiantes e incluir en la misma aprendices de distintos niveles para contrastar la evolución de su competencia pragmática. Por último, se necesita conocer más sobre el desempeño de los estudiantes en distintos actos de habla en la lengua extranjera, para observar si su competencia pragmática es diferente en otro tipo de interacciones.

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Pragmatic Competence in Social Contexts

Marcelino del Alto Alvarez

Abstract

English language instruction has been focused, for the most part, on the linguistic elements of the language: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In other words, learners have been consistently provided with quality instruction on the basis of accurate language output (Harmer, 2015, p. 5). Notwithstanding, there are other aspects that are required in order to communicate effectively in a foreign language, such as pragmatic competence, politeness, speech acts, and apologizing (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 69). This study attempts to demonstrate how pragmatic knowledge helps learners to improve their communication abilities in social contexts. Furthermore, the importance of teaching pragmatic competence that is needed to perform in social contexts is paramount in the foreign language classrooms (Birner, 2013). Therefore, three questions have emerged: What challenges do students face when they communicate in social contexts? How do the students employ their pragmatic competence when they apologize? and What pragmatic language do the students need to know in order to apologize appropriately? The results of this study suggest that even though the students were able to perform a conversation and construct cohesive dialogues when they apologized, they need to learn and develop specific language to apologize appropriately; also, they need to refine their communication skills in order to transmit the desired message and get their interlocutors to accept their apologies.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, pragmatic competence, politeness, speech acts, apologizing*.

Introduction

Different English-language learners want to learn either a foreign or a second language for different purposes. Perhaps, they are not fully aware of the challenges, implications, and complications that learning will present. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for their teachers to make them cognizant about all the required aspects that the target language comprises since there are many linguistic differences between their first language and the foreign language they intend to learn. Notwithstanding, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers strive to achieve that their students are successful in learning to communicate effectively and fluently. Also, they apply a variety of methods and approaches, such as structural, communicative, and functional-notional approaches that will reinforce the fact that language aims to portray human behavior (Mey, 1993).

However, there have been several research studies about the pragmatic skills the students need to learn in order to perform language in a variety of contexts. For instance, Mirzaei et al. (2012, p. 79) stated that language use can help to map out the socio-cultural norms and conventions as well as the linguistic forms and strategies that underlie the pragmatic performance of different language speakers in a variety of target language use situations. In addition, another linguistic aspect is the pragmatic awareness that will contribute to the development of the learners' communication strategies to use language as functionally as possible when they interact within a language community (Birner, 2013, pp. 2-3). All that said, it is paramount for EFL teachers to incorporate the necessary communication strategies for the learners to master and use in meaningful ways either inside or outside the classroom.

Furthermore, in order to have a clear idea about pragmatics; it is important to define it as "the study of how language is used and interpreted by its users in real-world situations" (Thornbury, 2006, pp. 174-175). In other words, language does not have the same meaning in different situations, so it is then the context that will determine whether the speakers express a literal or intended meaning depending on the given situation e.g., when someone asks the question: *Are you ok?* If this question is asked in two different situations, such as in the classroom and at the supermarket. For instance, in the following fabricated example, there is a dialogue that takes place in the classroom between Mr. Lopez who is an

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher and his student Carl who is an EFL student and has been attending his English class for a few months. Read the following dialogue between a teacher and his student Carl:

Teacher: Carl, are you ok?
Carl: Yes, I am.

If Carl is completing an activity in the classroom, he would take the question as if he has any questions about how to complete the activity. Now, in the following conversation Carl is at a supermarket:

Clerk: Sir, are you ok?
Carl: Yes, I am.

In this exchange, Carl may think that he does not 'look ok' so the clerk may even think that Carl is not physically ok in contrast to not knowing what to do at the supermarket like in the exchange above.

Further, this study aims to demonstrate how pragmatic knowledge helps learners improve their communicative abilities in social contexts. On the one hand, teachers introduce functional language and implement activities that promote its use; on the other hand, they incorporate meaningful situations in their daily lesson in order to develop the learners' pragmatic competence.

In addition to learners' knowledge of pragmatics, L2 pragmatics should be incorporated in the classroom, that is, teaching learners how-to-say-what-to-whom-when (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, pp. 68-69). Because language use in their L1 (first language) may differ from their L2 (second language), it is their teachers' responsibility to raise their awareness of the main differences. In order to develop the students' pragmatic competence, it is imperative to create the most appropriate conditions for the learners to perform language in situations that they will encounter outside the classroom. Hence, some of the aspects of language use that can increase the students' pragmatic awareness are listening to interactions, paying close attention to the listener's reactions, and being thoughtful about their language choice as well as the results of right choice of words depending on the situation, they are performing language in (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, p. 29).

Moreover, students should be given the opportunity to interact in different tasks so the teacher monitors and evaluates their language choices and then collects samples in order to assess and solve any conflicting issues regarding language choice. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) suggested that “L2 pragmatics aims to evaluate students’ speech act use during conversational practice as they manipulate social and content variables through their interactions, spoken or written DCTs (Discourse completion tasks) in which the learners respond either orally or in writing, and role plays where the participants are assigned specific roles to perform in particular scenarios and settings.” (p. 70).

In most classes taught in the language school I work at in Guadalajara, Mexico, I have observed that the learners make spirited efforts to select the most appropriate language when they interact with their peers. Nevertheless, it is due to the limited understanding of pragmatic knowledge that they at times do not convey the message they intend because of not choosing the language that best fits in the situation they are engaged in. By the same token, pragmatics is intended to provide the knowledge the learners need to use when they interact with others in social contexts and to better understand the effect such language use has on other people.

General and Specific Objectives

First of all, the subject of this study was to set activities for the learners to make language choices in accordance with different social contexts in the most natural way as possible and thus provide them with the opportunity to raise their awareness of the idea that they would have to select their language depending on the roles that they play in their daily social life. The latter will activate their pragmatic competence by exposing them to different situations that require the use of language in different formal and informal situations as well as it will provide with suggestions of speech acts to use based on the contexts. Furthermore, the activities that the learners were involved in were aimed to develop their pragmatic competence, that is, appropriate use of language in social contexts (Taguchi, 2009, p. 1)

Along with the general objective of this study which is to develop students' pragmatic competence, the impact of the connection with its social use was borne in mind. In other words, as the learners were engaged in a variety of dialogue practice, they were encouraged to be conscious of functional phrases and speech acts.

With that in mind, the specific objectives are intended to:

- Raise students' awareness of intended pragmatic meaning of the language they use daily in different social contexts.
- Incorporate several speech acts to their interactions so their interlocutors' comprehension is achieved and thus prevent any sorts of communication breakdown.
- Teach the learners to integrate speech act sets cohesively whenever they apologize so they achieve their interlocutor's sincere acceptance of their apologies.

Research Questions

For this study to achieve an established clear aim, the following questions were asked:

- What challenges do students face when they communicate in social contexts?
- How do the students apply their pragmatic competence when they apologize?
- What pragmatic language do the students need to know in order to apologize effectively?

Such questions emerged from the given interactions facilitated by the instructor in daily classroom practice and from the results of the students' specific needs to convey clear messages to their interlocutors. While the learners performed during the dialogues including functional language, it was noted that there were some elements of their interactions that needed to be developed, namely socially-oriented interactions, intended messages beyond their literal meaning, variety of phrases and lexical items, and formulaic language use.

In line with the elements, the need for developing students' pragmatic competence was viewed as essential, that is, teachers would plan their classes in ways that pragmatic knowledge use would be a tenet in everyday classes. Furthermore, teachers would be urged to rationalize the inclusion of pragmatic competence they promote in classroom activities and the extent to which they develop the learners' ability to transfer that competence to social contexts. The answers to the posed questions above will be the catalyst for an insightful analysis and reflections to the teachers and the researcher in order to develop the learners' ability to perform pragmatic competence in social contexts.

Need for Research

From consulted existing literature, I learned that there is a plethora of evidence that the significance of developing learners' pragmatic competence has been consistently discussed; not only how it can be taught, but also, how it can be improved in daily interactions outside the classrooms. Nevertheless, research regarding learners' success of pragmatic language use awareness should require further efforts since the need to comprehend pragmatic meaning involves several aspects, such as an interweaving linguistic analysis, local context information, and sociolinguistic dimensions, for instance sociocultural and historical information (LoCastro, 2012, p. xi).

This research study is aimed to demonstrate how pragmatic knowledge helps learners to improve their communicative abilities in social contexts. What challenges do students face when they communicate in social contexts? How do the students apply their pragmatic competence when they apologize? What pragmatic language do the students need to know in order to apologize effectively? To answer these questions a review of literature on pragmatic competence, politeness, speech acts, and apologizing was conducted as well as a subset of potential social contexts was identified.

The identified problem took place in EFL language classes that are taught daily at a private language institute where teachers are committed to teaching English, that is to say, English is the only language being taught. In spite of the consistent efforts being made by the teachers, there is an existing drawback in the expected learning outcomes due to the use of grammar-focused methods;

as a result, most of the class time is spent making sure the learners attain grammatical rules. The latter results in students' lack of ability to use the language for communicative purposes and thus at times, they show remarkably limited skills in communicating with an English speaker outside the classroom and in social contexts (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) since they lack communicative and meaningful practice that goes beyond the learning of grammatical structures.

The need for this study evolved from an ongoing observation and experimentation of several different teaching methods –for example structural, communicative, and functional– notional that were geared towards linguistic aspects and methodologies that attempted to build communicative skills superficially. Also, most of the class time was focused on teaching basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In other words, the teaching and learning process was not focused on the abilities the students needed to learn to communicate effectively in social contexts.

The purpose of this study resulted from the observations made in several classes regarding the use of language among the students in a language class during speaking practice. That is, as they interacted during speaking activities, they came across situations in which they did or said something socially inappropriate and thus they needed to apologize to their interlocutors, yet they did not do it perhaps either because they were more focused on achieving the task or because they did not know the necessary language to apologize. The latter was one of the main challenges they faced since they were focused on achieving a task and they ignored the importance of pragmatic competence (Nicholas, 2015) as they interacted in social contexts.

Furthermore, one remarkable aspect to their interactions required that the learners apologized after violating a minor social rule unintentionally, such as saying something wrong, making grammar or pronunciation mistakes, and interrupting other speakers. Nevertheless, they seemed completely unaware of the best time, the most appropriate way to apologize, and the language they needed to perform apologies depending on the situation as well as the people they were interacting with. It is hoped that through the analysis of the language used by the learners in specific situations posed by the researcher, they will be taught the necessary phrases and expressions to improve in their daily communication and pragmatic language use.

Literature Review

Language has several functions, such as conveying or understanding information; so, within the formal setting of the classroom, communication is always the main goal. Therefore, the socio-cultural aspects of learners will be highly relevant, so classroom practice activities should facilitate opportunities for students to speak and allow them to express their personal thoughts in realistic situations. For the most part, cross-cultural pragmatics refers to the study of meaning negotiation between different cultures and how language acquires meaning through context and through its sociocultural embedding (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). Because meaning is not inherent in the utterances we produce, messages have to be interpreted by drawing on contextual information, the dynamics between the speaker and his/her interactional partner(s), and the common knowledge that we share with our interlocutors (Stadler, 2018). Interlanguage Pragmatics (defined as the comprehension and production of speech acts by learners as they acquire their L2) and the related speech act knowledge have been taken as essential and highly relevant aspects of language instruction in terms of discourse and interactions (Kasper and Dahl, 1991, p. 216). Other key points in developing learners' cognitive process are contextualized language use and functional objectives in order to enhance their pragmatic awareness, that is, the recognition of how social meaning is conveyed through pragmatic comprehension and production (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

Likewise, pragmatic competence –the competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent and the knowledge on how to perform common speech acts and speech act sets –is closely related to the participants' sociocultural values and beliefs, and thus their pragmatic choices are embedded in their cultural identities as they resort to certain speech acts to perform communicative acts (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). When planning and preparing a lesson, grammatical structures and vocabulary are not the only linguistic aspects to be considered but the speech acts and the possible speech act sets as well, specifically, speakers resort to several strategies to perform a certain speech act.

That is why, it is important to present such pairs as agreeing and disagreeing or requesting and responding to requests together (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 8). Another essential point is context. Students should be aware of the situations in which the speech act can be used, the appropriate level of politeness (compare speaking to a friend or to your boss) and the right intonation (one and the same phrase can sound sarcastic or polite with different intonation).

The following literature review includes summaries of what other experts have done in relation to this research study; it also seeks to justify the purpose of executing it with regards to the importance of pragmatic competence, politeness, speech acts, and apologizing.

Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic Competence is the competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent and the knowledge in how to perform common speech acts and speech act sets. The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference, 2018) suggests that the learner develops and performs principles of language use when expressing messages in three different ways:

a. organized, structured and arranged ('discourse competence');
b. used to perform communicative functions ('functional competence');
c. sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata ('design competence').

As far as functional competence concerns (b) above), learners develop *Flexibility*, that is to say, they resort to a range of functional language choices related to *Sociolinguistic appropriateness* in different settings (pp. 138-139). For example, two aspects of *Flexibility* refer to the learner's ability to adapt his/her expression to deal with less routine and even difficult situations and to exploit a wide range of simple language flexibility to express much of what he/she wants.

Although it is understood that competence is what one knows and performance is what one does, only performance is observable, and it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated with a reasonable level of proficiency in cultural contexts and social constraints. Nicholas (2015) supports those societal and pragmatic norms determine the effectiveness of communication competence since conversation analysis requires the effective implementation of speech acts that are paramount in content-based instruction. For instance, learners need to engage in meaningful language practice in order to notice the gaps in their knowledge.

In the light of performance, each student brings their own expectations and target needs to the classroom and it is crucial for their teachers to know them and take them into account; Taguchi (2008) sustains that receptive language skills could be employed to fill in the existing gap in pragmatic comprehension, that is, the learners' ability to understand conventional and nonconventional meaning is developed by providing them with focused listening exercises. Furthermore, speech acts in the form of language functions refer to the goals and purposes for which the speaker uses the language for communication since language is used in a great number of formal and informal social situations, for different purposes (business meetings, casual conversations with friends, booking a table at a restaurant, etc.), and for each purpose-specific vocabulary and grammatical structures may be used.

There are a few important points worth mentioning when speaking about teaching social strategies of speech acts (Boxer & Pickering, 1995) due to their importance in day-to-day performance and their impact in educational settings. First of all, they hardly ever appear in isolation, for example, a dialogue with a receptionist in a hotel may involve greeting, asking for information, and making a polite request. Or, even more commonly, a question or a request requires a response, which is also connected with specific grammar and vocabulary. Indeed, the target of sociolinguistics and pragmatics involves several different language characteristics, such as speech act, functional objectives, and non-verbal features to mention some; teachers are accountable for teaching as many sociopragmatic aspects as feasible, particularly the knowledge of the relationships between communicative action and power, social distance, imposition, and the social conditions and consequences of what you do, when, and to whom (Kasper and Roever, 2005). Mirzaei et al. (2012) refer to teaching only a few aspects of functional skills since the learners seem to be skill-limited and the individual differences are predominant while they are engaged in sociocultural language practice as their own culture might not be compatible to that of their own, for instance, learners may not feel obliged to give explanations after declining an invitation in their first language culture as opposed to when they decline an invitation in a foreign language which may be considered rude to a certain extent.

In addition, Hocini (2011) underscores that several linguistic aspects are to be mandatory in a language class since they are unfortunately neglected by some teachers that adhere closely to a syllabus. It is the case of some school programs in EFL contexts where the focus is to develop their students' linguistic competence rather than incorporating activities for the learners to transfer their newly acquired knowledge to realistic situations outside the classroom and book contents (p. 1). Besides that, the teaching and learning process that focused mainly on linguistic items precluded language instruction from being close to realistic teaching rather than a more societal focus to engage the learners in building a closer relationship between language and society.

Politeness

One aspect of pragmatic competence this research study intends to analyze is how learners express politeness when they communicate with others in several social contents; in other words, the main interest is to study, analyze, and find strategies to teach language learners how to be polite in the target language regarding forms and functions of politeness. Kasper asserts that nonnative speakers are unaware of the importance of being polite. Thus, they are susceptible to violating social rules; as a result, they do not employ politeness as strategic conflict avoidance and social indexing including a compensatory action to avoid being taken as rude, to reduce the level of face-threatening, and to be treated equally in society (1990).

Equally importantly, Mansoor (2018) states that politeness is useful to decrease potential threats and makes a clear distinction between negative indirectness and positive indirectness. The former is a strategy to decrease threat by explaining what is being requested rather than making a direct request. Whereas the latter aids the decrease of the threat of disagreements, interruptions, and other situations in which the speaker expresses an opinion, namely conversations, interactions, and phone conversations.

Walkó (2007) underscores the importance of viewing pragmatic politeness as a way of emphasizing solidarity as well as the intention to find common ground between the participants in the interaction. That is to say, the implementation of politeness strategies intends to soften the imposition generated by the participants' claims and to enhance the importance of resorting to the appropriate discourse type when being polite.

Speech Acts

Mirzaei et al. (2012) suggest two main aspects that decrease pragmatic failure, a) sociopragmatic competence (the use of forms and strategies in appropriate contexts) and b) pragmalinguistic competence (knowledge to convey particular illocutions). They also underscore the importance of speech act realization as well as the different choices made between Iranian L2 learners and native speakers regarding speech acts strategies when apologizing, requesting, and refusing (p. 80).

Nicholas (2015, pp. 383-384) attests that language learning presents several nuances and complexities, for example pragmatic competence and speech acts have been aspects of language learning that have not been addressed efficiently during language instruction; henceforth, learners exhibit several issues when they perform language use in the classroom. Nonetheless, he goes on to suggest that classroom activities, like speaking exercises, functional language practice, and real-world strategies interactions should treat speech acts extensively by providing the learners with a number of speech act sets to use within contextualized conversations and situations.

Bornmann (2001) underscores the pragmatic value of speech acts since the students resort to non-linguistic forms of language as they perform social norms when they introduce themselves, make requests, decline invitations, and give compliments. In addition, he states that the mastery of linguistic elements, such as grammar and vocabulary would not ensure that the learners have the abilities to communicate effectively. Likewise, he stresses the fact that teachers should teach their students to use words and phrases for communicative purposes in certain situations in order to prevent pragmatic failure.

Marlowe (n.d.) presents a research study about Philippine TV commercials where he explains the impact of advertisements on television of millions of people since they are exposed to them and the purpose is to get consumers to purchase their products. He explains that “TV commercials seem to be quite socially bound in nature, as the messages in any advertisement are often expressed in a socially appropriate or desirable manner so as to accomplish the goal of transmitting a persuasive message in order to sell a specific product” (p. 4). Lastly, he places the intention of the transmitted messages on television that seem to be far more impactful than linguistic forms because the aim is to show how the use of speech acts are dominant in understanding the impact of television commercials in the Philippine culture.

Gowasa et al. (2019) underscore the needs in the Turkish language in their descriptive qualitative study since they want to enrich the instruction of Turkish as a native or foreign language. They explain that speech acts are pragmatic elements that engage the speakers and their interlocutors in different scenarios, that is, the audience may vary in accordance with the situation in which the interaction is taking place, for instance, the listener or the reader. Additionally, they state that not only is it essential to bear in mind the specific scenario where the interaction is taking place, but also, the locutionary action being performed. Hence, there are three related actions mentioned in their study, i) the basic act of speech or production of meaningful language expression, ii) the act of illocution, the meaning of speech intended by the speaker, and iii) the perlocution act of action resulting from locution.

Notwithstanding, they stress the use of specific use of speech acts, on the one hand as illocutionary actions produced on the basis of literal meaning conventions; on the other hand, as acts of perlocution related to the speaker’s intent and the listener’s impact relying on given situations.

Identically, García-Santillán (2021) asserts that speech acts are used daily in every culture; he also suggests that, due to Mexico’s geographical proximity to the United States, it is worth analyzing how Mexican learners of English would tend to use speech acts when they communicate with native speakers. For example, there are several functions that differ from one culture to another because what a speech act may mean in one culture, it may convey a completely different meaning in the other one. For instance, when Americans complain, they are direct and they underscore the negative behavior; whereas Mexicans go around and around until the point is made. Another case in point is the grammatical structures used when invitations are made. For instance, question forms and modal verbs are used in English; while Spanish speakers tend to use positive forms without necessarily asking questions when they invite somebody to do something (p. 20).

Apologizing

At times, learners face a constant challenge when choosing the most appropriate language to apologize and many times they may not even know how and when to apologize. Moreover, social variables influence the apology strategies to be used since interlocutors need to be aware of social and cultural aspects embedded in their interaction, and thus be able to find a remedy to redress behavior (Fadhil, 2018).

Rieger (2017) refers to the importance of analyzing how apologies are constructed in specific situations. For this reason, apologies are dynamically studied regarding situated interaction to determine how well they are either constructed or negotiated in social contexts. Therefore, apologies will be related to the type of interaction among the speakers involved and their situations in which there is a social need to perform apologies, such as everyday situations, interpersonal communication, and natural occurrences in spoken discourse.

Additionally, Scher and Darley (1997) define apologies as common utterances that are offered when a person has violated a social norm and thus intends to set things right. Also, the individual experiences a sense of guilt due to the offense and admits offending rule. That is, once a speaker realizes the fact, he tries to find the best way to remedy the social disruption by selecting the most appropriate discourse to transmit an apology in order to reduce the blame.

Chaemsaithong (2009) approaches apologies from a historical perspective as she analyzes texts containing conventional forms of apologies by taking into consideration the social forms of writing specific to a speech community and by making a distinction between two main functions of apologies, and by arguing that apologies are not a device that repairs and redresses an offence but rather political behavior performed to negotiate interpersonal relationships and to accomplish the writer's discursive aim.

Similarly, Meier (1998) attests that due to the number of studies done on apology behavior and a great deal of attention given to the importance of insights into understanding apologies, so valuable understandings have been achieved. In addition, apology studies are geared towards identifying contextual factors, on the one hand, the severity of the offense and the relationship of the interlocutors; on the other hand, the pragmatics of apologies, i.e., who says what to whom, when, and why.

In short, his study showed that the most frequently occurring apologies included rather formulaic expressions, for example, sorry, pardon, excuse, and forgive. At the same time, several situations identified favorable situations for justifications as the offenders felt accountable and liable to persuade the interlocutors who in most cases were intimates. The latter enhances the fact that the interlocutors' relationship is paramount in the speaker's performance of apologies.

Methodology

Approaches to Methodology

There were 30 participants, all of them are young adults who are learning English in the same classroom at a language school, they were divided into pairs four times. The research was divided into four different sessions, one for each dialogue once a week since they attend their English class only on Saturdays. While working in pairs, they created, practiced, and wrote their dialogues. They were advised to first discuss the language they wanted to include, that is, they orally selected the speech acts and the possible responses to each one before they wrote their ideas down. Additionally, their interactions were monitored actively in case they had questions, or they would not know how to structure their dialogues cohesively.

Once they had finished writing their dialogues, they turned them in to be analyzed qualitatively. As the participants turned in their dialogues, the researcher asked casual questions sporadically in a non-judgmental way (e.g., 'How did you feel during the interactions?', What was the most challenging context?', and 'Did you feel your apologies were successful?', 'Why?', 'Why not?').

The participants were given 4 different contexts for them to write their own dialogues After they wrote them, they turned them in for the use of language to be analyzed qualitatively. Once the participants finished each dialogue, some individual interviews were conducted with the purpose of finding out how well they had felt during the interactions.

The study aimed to facilitate functional language practice through role-plays in which the learners would perform and write 4 different dialogues in different contexts, namely apologizing to their teacher for being late to class, to their friend for being late to a party, to a stranger for accidentally crashing into their car, and to their friend, for crashing the car they borrowed from them. The purpose was to encourage the learners to use functional language to the best of their abilities so their reasoning and language choice could be analyzed and assessed depending on the situations they performed. Moreover, they were asked to analyze the interactional strategies they use in daily classroom interactions related to apologizing, and then those strategies were analyzed. For example, the interactions required that the participants followed the speech act sets structure suggested by Ishihara and Cohen (2010, pp. 8-9):

1. Expression of an apology: A word, expression, or sentence containing a verb such as "sorry," "excuse," "forgive," or "apologize." In American English, "I apologize . . ." is found more in writing than it is in oral language. An expression of an apology can be intensified – in American English, usually by adding intensifiers such as "really," "terribly," "awfully," "so," "very," or some combination of them – for example, "I'm really very sorry."
2. Acknowledgment of responsibility – degree of recognition of fault. This strategy includes a continuum: accepting the blame: "It's my fault"; expressing self-deficiency: "I was confused/I didn't see/You are right"; lack of intent: "I didn't mean to"; implicit expression of responsibility: "I was sure I had given you the right directions."

3. Explanation or account – a description of the situation which led to the offense, serving as an indirect way of apologizing. This explanation is intended to set things right. At times it is interpreted as an excuse.
4. Offer of repair: the apologizer makes a bid to carry out an action or provide payment for some kind of damage which resulted from his/her infraction (e.g., “Let me pick those up for you” “I’ll be there in half an hour”). This strategy is situation-specific and is only appropriate when actual damage has occurred.
5. Promise of non-recurrence: the apologizer commits him/herself to not having the offense happen again (e.g., “I’ll never forget our anniversary again.”). This strategy is situation-specific and less frequent than the other strategies.

Table 1 below describes the interactions that the learners performed for the purpose of this study:

Role-play	Context
1	Apologizing to their teachers for being late to class.
2	Apologizing to their friends for being late to their party.
3	Apologizing to strangers for crashing into their cars.
4	Apologizing to their friend for crashing the car they borrowed from them.

Table 1. Interactions learners performed.

The findings offer a solid framework for further analysis and for reflections on students’ rationale for using the specific language regarding the situations they are in and to the people they interact with.

Instrument Design

The author designed two instruments, the first one is Worksheet 1 with the structure of an apology along with speech act sets to introduce and promote the use of apologizing language by following the structure based on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, in Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 24):

1. The participants were advised to begin their dialogues by introducing their apologies in a polite way and using phrases that got their interlocutors ready to hear their intended apology. In other words, they were encouraged to "break the bad news gently":
   a. I'm not exactly sure how to put this, but . . .
   b. I've got to apologize for . . .
   c. I'm afraid I have something to tell you . . .
   d. Um, this isn't easy to explain, but . . .
   e. Could I talk with you for a minute?

2. After that they proceeded to apologize by implementing an IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device, that is, an utterance or part of an utterance that conveys the speaker's communicative intention). In other words, they were challenged to use different utterances to convey the true intention of apologizing since they had the tendency of just saying "I'm sorry", which oftentimes had no impact on the listener. The importance of using the following devices was for the participants to have a variety of phrases and for their language choice not to become formulaic:
   a. I'm sorry.
   b. I sincerely apologize.
   c. Ever so sorry.
   d. I had that wrong.
   e. Excuse me.
   f. Pardon me.

3. The next step was to take on responsibility for their actions, that is, the acceptance of blame in an anger-free fashion and for the listener to start accepting the apology. Some of them include an intensifier e.g., "*awfully*" and "*extremely*" in a genuine way:

a. My mistake.
b. It’s all my fault.
c. I can’t tell you how sorry I am.
d. I just don’t know what to say.
e. Oh, I’m *awfully* sorry.
f. I am *extremely* sorry.

4. Then, they were required to give an explanation or account. Even though the explanations may be taken as excuses, it is important to state the reason that originated the offense:
   a. I’m sorry but the . . .
   b. I’m very sorry. I didn’t realize it.
   c. I was not paying attention.
   d. I got distracted.
   e. It slipped my mind.
   f. I got confused.

5. Another aspect included was an offer of repair. These phrases could be useful if the apologizer has broken or damaged something:
   a. I’ll fix it immediately.
   b. I’ll look into it myself.
   c. I’ll take care of it.
   d. I’ll have that looked after.
   e. I’ll fix that for you.
   f. I’ll make it up.

6. Finally, the participants were encouraged to promise forbearance, so the listener understood the interlocutor’s regret and expected the offense not to happen again. In addition, the apologizer made a serious commitment:
   a. I’m so sorry. I promise you it won’t happen again.
   b. I will pay more attention next time.
   c. I will surely be more careful in the future.
   d. I promise I’ll . . .

e. I'll prevent this from happening again.
f. There's no excuse. I'll . . .

The second instrument designed was Worksheet 2 with a dialogue template to be referred to by the participants as they wrote their own dialogs in the four different contexts:

1. To their teachers for being late to class.
2. To their friends for being late to their party.
3. To a stranger for crashing into their cars.
4. To their friend for crashing their car they borrowed from them.

Notwithstanding provided that the participants needed a certain degree of guidance to construct their dialogues to be analyzed qualitatively, the researcher designed a structure to be followed based on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The following dialogue template was the basis of the interactions.

N.B. the language used in the instructions to the participants was simplified to avoid the use of metalanguage that could be confusing or unclear to them:

The roles are *Speaker A* is the apologizer and *Speaker B* is the offended party. As noted in the dialogue template, the structure of the apology is organized, however, the participants were just instructed to follow the structure and make their own language choice to either apologize or respond to the apology by using the suggested phrases of their own words.

Speaker A: Hello, (Break the bad news gently).
Speaker B: What is it? / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (Apologize).
Speaker B: Why? / What happened? / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (Take on responsibility).
Speaker B: Oh, don't worry. / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (Give an explanation).
Speaker B: It's ok. / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (Offer repair).

Speaker B: No problem. / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (Promise not to do it again).
Speaker B: You'll be fine. / (use your own words).
Speaker A: (End your conversation). / (use your own words).
Speaker B: (use your own words to end the dialogue).

The same dialogue template was used by the participants in the four different situations with the purpose of following the same structure and changing the phrases in accordance with the contexts.

The third designed instrument resulted from the notes that were taken while the participants interacted and wrote their dialogues; it was a retrospective interview with a set of five questions to be asked at the end of the interactions once the dialogues had been submitted by the participants. The conducted retrospective interview included the following questions:

1. How did you feel when you apologized?
2. What is the most difficult aspect of apologizing?
3. Do you think the other people accepted your apologies? Why? Why not?
4. How does apologizing improve your relationships with other people?
5. What problems could you avoid when you apologize?

The purpose was to raise the participants' awareness of the language choice in every different situation and to collect important data for further analysis.

Procedures for the Data Collection Methods

In the first place, the participants were informed about the study and its purpose – to perform pragmatic competence in several social contexts. In the four social contexts chosen by the author, the participants were involved in different situations in which they apologized (See Table 1 above).

During class, two worksheets were introduced to the participants so they could be familiarized with their contents and make sure that they understood what to do. The two worksheets included the following:

1. Worksheet 1 Speech Act Sets in the Classroom: The structure of an apology and speech act sets. The worksheet includes examples of each Speech Act Set for the learners to choose from in accordance with the type of interaction, such as the level of formality and who they are talking to.
2. Worksheet 2 Speech Act Sets in the Classroom Dialogue Template: A dialogue template for the participants to refer to and write their own. The worksheet includes a dialogue template for a role-play to be performed by including the speech acts presented in Worksheet 1.

Research Results

As this study started being conducted and before the participants were engaged in performing the dialogues, they were asked one question as a means of setting the general context of the situation. The same question applied to different contexts in an informal way, and it was used as a lead-in. The following transcription depicts the short and casual interaction between the teacher and the students during the lead-in stage of the study:

Teacher: How do you apologize to a friend, a stranger, your parents, your boss, or your teacher?

Students: We say "sorry."

Teacher: Do you say anything else?

Students: Not really.

Teacher: What about saying something different depending on who you apologize to?

Students: We normally say "sorry" or "I'm (so) sorry."

Teacher: Why?

Students: We just don't know what else to say.

Teacher: That's fine. Now you are going to learn other ways to apologize and what else you can tell other people when you want to apologize formally and informally depending on the situation.

Even though the participants had been provided with a worksheet for thought-provoking purposes, they did not exhibit any further knowledge of apologizing strategies nor any awareness of full mastery of varied speech acts.

After the lead-in, the participants were seated next to their partners in a traditional horseshoe shape sitting arrangement so the instructor could monitor their interactions as closely as possible for a number of different reasons, namely to make himself approachable and available, to answer any further questions about the directions, to assist the participants when necessary, and utmost importance, to listen to the participants' language choice as they interacted with their peers throughout the different situations and to collect data for a feedback session. The study was divided into four different sessions and started by having the participants work in pairs to create and write their own dialogues in the order stated in Table 2 below.

A total of 15 dialogues per situation were collected, which makes a total of 60 different dialogues to be analyzed qualitatively and discussed in the study. While the participants interacted, notes were taken to be used as a basis for individual retrospective interviews and to provide feedback.

Findings on Students Interactions on the Four Different Situations

Table 2 shows the way the study was structured regarding the dialogues the participants completed:

Theme Name	Number of Participants Involved	Number of Dialogues Performed and Written
Apologizing to their teachers for being late to class.	30	15
Apologizing to their friends for being late to their party.	30	15
Apologizing to strangers for crashing into their cars.	30	15
Apologizing to their friend for crashing their car they borrowed from them.	30	15

Table 2. Structure of the study.

The researcher selected two dialogues randomly from each situation; those dialogues provided enough insights of how well the participants had interacted while the research was being conducted. Even though the dialogues present minor grammar and spelling mistakes, they are intelligible and understandable enough to be analyzed, and thus they will be transcribed closely from their original version for objectivity purposes. After having read the dialogues written by the participants, the following results emerged:

Apologizing to their teachers for being late to class
There were two dialogues in which the participants did not seem to struggle when they started their conversations. They both used appropriate opening gambits, such as *"Could I talk to you for a minute?"* The selected questions were appropriate to the context since they were getting ready to apologize to their teacher which required a higher level of formality since it is a formal context even if there is a close relationship between the students and their teacher.

Once they started their conversations, they both apologized by using an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) and gave an excuse for being late as a means of taking on responsibility:

> Dialogue 1: *"I'm sorry, I was late for the class. I stopped the alarm in the morning, my mistake."*
> Dialogue 2: *"It's all my fault. I woke up late and I missed the bus."*
> After that they went on to give an explanation or account:
> Dialogue 1: *"I'm sorry but I've been studying until 3 am, so I couldn't wake up early."*
> Dialogue 2: *"Ok thank you, I got distracted when I put my alarm."*

So far, the participants seemed to have a clear understanding of how to apologize, but then as the dialogues went on and they tried to offer repair, they both used the same phrase which does not seem to connect efficiently since it was used alone without any other words. The phrase was *"I'll take care of it"* in both dialogues.

Even though their interlocutors seemed to understand their intent, they did not seem to take that offer of repair as a sign of lessening the graveness of their fault since the situation required further commitment due to its formality.

Lastly, as the participants were about to end their dialogues. The promise of forbearance was performed:

> Dialogue 1: *"I'm sorry. I promise you it won't happen again."* The apologizer resorted to the same speech act *"I'm sorry"* which was used at the beginning of the dialogue.
> Dialogue 2: *"I will pay more attention next time."* The apologizer used a different speech act as a promise.

Apologizing to their friends for being late to their party

The two dialogues presented in this situation contained more simplified language since the participants did not feel pressured by the context inasmuch as apologizing to someone they knew and felt close to because it was their friend, and their relationship was much stronger. Although the dialogues were appropriately sequenced, they exhibited minor grammar and vocabulary mistakes. The dialogues did not start very solidly because the language functions used were not complete, therefore the situation was not stated clearly from the beginning.

> Dialogue 1: *"Hello, I've to apologize for . . ."* The apologizer resorted to a speech act, but she did not complete it.
> Dialogue 2: "*Hello, Nicky how are you? I would like to tell you something hmm . . . I've apologize for coming late."* The apologizer did not convey a clear intention to apologize because the listener may have misinterpreted the statement "I've apologize" as either a completed apology or an intention to apologize.

Then, the IFIDs were used appropriately because they were selected efficiently:

> Dialogue 1: *"I can't tell you how sorry I am."*
> Dialogue 2: *"I sincerely apologize."*

Both IFIDs set the proper context of the apology that was going to be made next. Nevertheless, the language selected for taking on responsibility as acceptance of blame and giving an explanation was not chosen nor separated appropriately since the statements were incomplete but specific to the current intent:

> Dialogue 1: *"I was not paying attention."* This statement did not convey a complete message because no explanation was given.
> Dialogue 2: *"I was no paying attention, I was walking on my English survey, and I didn't pay attention with the hour."* These functions were somewhat unclear. I concluded that none of the apologizers took on responsibility since they did not account for their mistakes.

Once the apologizers offered repair, they chose an appropriate phrase, but they did not provide further information as to what they were willing to do to repair their fault:

> Dialogue 1: *"I'll take care of it."* There were no clear details of what was going to be taken care of, either the mistake or the cake (the apologizer burned a cake she was baking for her friend).
> Dialogue 2: *"I'll fix that for you."* Again, the apologizer did not provide further context for the listener to understand the offer completely.

Finally, the course of the conversation moved to the promise of forbearance. The apologizer in Dialogue 1 used the correct phrase *"I promise I will pay more attention"*, but she did not say anything else which made the promise vague. On the other hand, the apologizer in Dialogue 2, used an appropriate phrase *"I'll surely be more careful in the future."* The context of the dialogue provided meaning to the phrase, and thus it could stand alone.

Apologizing to strangers for crashing into their cars

These situations required a higher degree of politeness since the context was a car accident; therefore, the chosen language had to be further formal besides the fact that some emotions and feelings (e.g., fear, anger, concern, guilt, etc.) were involved. In addition, some potential physical damage could have resulted from the crash. They both started with an interjection:

> Dialogue 1: *"OMG So sorry I sincerely apologize for crashing your car."* The apologizer used an IFID immediately. It made sense because the situation required immediate action.
> Dialogue 2: "Oh my god!". The dialogue moved to the IFID after that *"I'm extremely sorry."* Perhaps, the apologizer did want to say anything until he found out that his interlocutor was fine.

Neither of the apologizers took on responsibility, they went ahead and gave explanations. This showed that the situation required further action rather that spoken words since the context itself was understood by both parties:

> Dialogue 1: *"My cell phone was ringing and I got distracted."*
> Dialogue 2: *"I was distracted in my cellphone in a call."*

In both dialogues the offer of repair was stated for the offended parties to feel supported after they learned that they were not hurt:

> Dialogue 1: *"so sorry I didn't see you passing by, I will pay for it."*
> Dialogue 2: *"I'll pay for the damage."*

At the end of both dialogues, promises of forbearance were made:

> Dialogue 1: *"I promise I will not take my phone* ***will*** *I drive* ***agane.****"*, what was meant was: "I promise I will not take my phone **when** I drive **again.**" Even though the promise was made, it would not affect the interlocutor's understanding in any way, but it certainly made the offender feel more committed not to doing it again for his own sake.
> Dialogue 2: Speaker B: *"Oh thank you. We will be fine. Pay attention the next time!"*
> Speaker A: *"Yes, thank you. I'm so sorry."*

The apologizer did not really make any promise of forbearance; he rather responded to the Speaker A's suggestion.

Apologizing to their friend for crashing their car they borrowed from them
Both dialogues started by breaking the bad news gently and by getting the listener ready to hear about the incident:

Dialogue 1: *"Hello I'm afraid I have something to tell you."*
Dialogue 2: *"Hello, could I talk with you for a minute?"*

Even though the apologizers were their interlocutors' friends, they carefully selected the most appropriate functions.

There seemed to be a high degree of confidence and trust between the speaker and the listener since apologizing language was not really used nor underscored; in other words, the language they used was more direct:

Dialogue 1: *"I sincerely apologize."*
Dialogue 2: *"Yes but I have to apologize."*

Regarding taking on responsibility, the apologizer in Dialogue 1 was more direct, *"My mistake."* This sounded more realistic when they apologized to a close friend; therefore, this showed that they were close enough to understand each other.

Whereas the apologizer in Dialogue 2 provided a more elaborate version, *"I was about to run over a little dog and I had to turn left suddenly and I crashed into a car."* Perhaps, the apologizer felt embarrassed about the incident, so he felt the need to provide a detailed account.

In addition, in both dialogues, there was an immediate offer of repair. Hence, both apologizers intended to maintain a close relationship with their interlocutors and prevent any further conflict:

Dialogue 1: *"I'll fix it immediatelly."*
Dialogue 2: *"I have a mechanic friend. He can fix it inmediately."*

Further, the promise of forbearance was performed in similar ways. In spite of having other options, they both seemed to feel more comfortable with the phrase they both could remember well:

Dialogue 1: *"It won't happend again."*
Dialogue 2: *"I'll promise this will not happen again."*

N.B. Spelling and grammatical mistakes were transcribed from the original version in order to maintain the objectivity of participants' language use.

Individual Interviews

The participants were asked the following questions right after their interactions and once they had turned in their dialogues to the researcher:

1. How did you feel when you apologized?
2. What was the most difficult aspect of apologizing?
3. Do you think the other people accepted your apologies? Why? Why not?
4. How does apologizing improve your relationships with other people?
5. What problems could you avoid when you apologize?

Generally speaking, the participants stated that they felt somewhat *"strange"* since they claimed not be used to following an elaborate structure whenever they had apologized to anyone before. Also, they stated that there were several expressions and phrases they had never heard nor used before, so they did not feel comfortable using them in their interactions.

Furthermore, they sustained that the most difficult aspect of apologizing was selecting the most appropriate language, phrases, and expressions. In addition, they said that they were not completely sure whether or not their interlocutors had understood and thus accepted their apologies; some of them said *"I felt a little awkward when I used a phrase, I wasn't completely sure how it would impact my classmate."* Hence, some participants were somehow dubious as to whether or not they had been successful at the end of every interaction.

Correspondingly, they were positive reactions to learning how to apologize because they felt that their interpersonal communication was improved as well as their interactions with their classmates because they have been studying English together for more than twelve months. Moreover, they were aware of the fact that they could avoid misunderstandings and future problems with their classmates every time they apologized.

Analysis

After having completed the study and presented the data collected, attention will be directed to the analysis of the results. The four situations in which the participants interacted will be analyzed as follows:

Participants apologized to their teachers for being late to class

The situation was formal and distant, so they had to carefully select the language they wanted to use when they apologized due to speaking to someone they were not too close to and considering the seriousness of the offense they had committed for being late to their class. For the most part, the participants use rather simple and repetitive language; and, to a certain degree, it was formulaic since they mainly used language that at some point would be commonly heard without necessarily making the desired impact on their interlocutors.

To their friends for being late to their party

When it came to an informal and close situation, the participants seemed to be more relaxed and they were not as thorough as they were when they selected language in a more formal situation. In addition, both parties added language items that exhibited a higher degree of confidence and trust since they were involved in a more casual situation, and thus the offense was not taken as seriously.

To strangers for crashing into their cars

The seriousness behind this formal and distant scenario required that the participants not only apologized effectively but they also needed to reduce the other parties' level of either anger or frustration; that is, even before they apologized for the offense, they had to make sure that the listener was physically fine, so they could proceed to apologize in the most effective way possible.

To their friend for crashing the car they borrowed from them
This was a rather embarrassing situation. Besides the fact that this was an informal scenario, the participants held a closer relationship, so they seemed to be fearful of losing their friends' trust which would potentially affect their friendship in the future. After all, there was a possibility for their friends not to get so upset and they would accept their apologies.

While the students performed during class on a daily basis, it was observed that as they tried to find a remedy to redress behavior, they appeared to struggle to choose the most appropriate language to apologize depending on the social context. Moreover, it was clear to them that every time they violated any social norm, they found themselves in the need to apologize; nevertheless, they apologized by using the same language regardless of the situation, that is, it was noted that they said “sorry” in most cases. Therefore, it was concluded that they needed to be more aware of the pragmatics of apologies.

Conclusions

As an outset of this study, three main objectives were established. The first objective was to raise students' awareness of the intended pragmatic meaning of the language they use daily in different social contexts. The second objective was to incorporate several speech acts to their interactions so their interlocutors' comprehension is achieved and thus prevent any sorts of communication breakdown. And the third one was to teach the learners to integrate speech act sets cohesively whenever they apologize so they achieve their interlocutor's sincere acceptance of their apologies.

What this study did do successfully is to answer the research questions:

a. What challenges do students face when they communicate in social contexts?
b. How do the students use their pragmatic competence when they apologize?

c. What pragmatic language do the students need to know in order to apologize effectively?

In the final analysis, the results of the study were extremely encouraging since there are several positive outcomes that emerged from the data collected and the results obtained. First and foremost, one of the most beneficial aspects of the current study was the way in which the interactions were structured since they exhibited the challenges they face when they communicate in social contexts, the way in which they apply the pragmatic competence when they apologized, and the needed pragmatic knowledge to apologize effectively. Another solid aspect was the fact that the situations were carefully selected to be as close as possible to realistic and meaningful for the participants to interact, so they would get engaged in situations that they would most definitely encounter outside the classroom. The results of this study could inspire several future projects, both new and, particularly of interest, revisions, and variations on what was presented here.

In contrast to the positive aspects stated above, there were some other ones to be pondered about and improved upon. For instance, the implementation of functional language lessons in order to expand on the participant's existing knowledge and the facilitation of practice activities in which they resort to useful language regarding apologies. Another area of opportunity was to allow the participants to choose the social contexts that would relate to their own meaningful contexts, that is, providing them with the freedom to select a scenario that is related to their personalized contexts.

The results of this study could be further convincing if the participants are given feedback and thus the opportunity to improve their own interactions. This would allow them to go deeper into the matter of apologizing and understand the structure of an apology better. What this study did do successfully was to draw my attention to how well my students select the most appropriate language to apologize in the classroom. To further strengthen claims, the results of this study could inspire a number of future projects revisions and variations on what was presented here in regards to developing my students' pragmatic competence.

All in all, it would be interesting to conduct this research study in groups that are at different CEFR levels in order to assess how well the learners could cope with the language related to apologizing in different contexts. In addition, I would like to include a variety of speech act sets that go along with others in the same social contexts, such as negotiating language, complaining, making invitations, and giving excuses.

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Students' Opinions on the Use of Glossaries and Learning Techniques for Vocabulary Development

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Abstract

This chapter describes the process and the results of a didactic sequence that focused on learning techniques for vocabulary development and the creation of a glossary in a group of volunteer English language learners of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa. These learners study BA programs belonging to different knowledge fields, and they state that the English language subject is totally disconnected from their other BA subjects. Thus, the abovementioned didactic sequence was conceived, and this paper aims to present its different stages, the results obtained as well as the opinions of the participating students about it. The intervention took place in order to work on the development of English language vocabulary in a meaningful way, so that students could learn English by relating this learning to the contents and skills that are worked on in their different BA programs. The results of the didactic sequence show that our participants were satisfied with the whole experience since they were able to link the subject of English language to other subjects directly related to their BA programs.

Keywords: *Vocabulary development, glossaries, specialized terminology, university students, students' opinions.*

Introduction

Vocabulary development is considered as one of the most important components in the teaching-learning process of a foreign language (Aitchinson, 1994; Henriksen, 1999; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). According to Henriksen (1999), vocabulary is a revealing factor in a student's language proficiency. Nevertheless, it is also deemed a significant challenge (Ghazal, 2007).

The increase in students' vocabulary is an issue that foreign language teachers face at most language institutes. In the past, it was thought that asking students to memorize endless lists of words was enough (cf. Barone, 1992). The problem was that students did not use these words in their everyday practice, so they easily forgot them.. Thus, it is important to analyze what 'learning' and 'increasing vocabulary' imply so that English language teaching practices can be improved.

On the one hand, Schmitt states that, "We should view partial vocabulary knowledge as being in a state of flux, with both learning and forgetting occurring until the word is mastered and 'fixed' in memory" (2000, p. 129). On the other hand, Lahuerta and Pujol (1996) state that 'To know a word' means to have phonetic, graphic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge about it. This is a way of making words memorable for our students. In other words, vocabulary should not be taught in isolation, but as part of the other skills in order to develop students' communicative competences.

Based on what has been stated above, it was decided to work on a proposal that consisted of creating glossaries with a group of university students. This research was conducted at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa, a public university in Mexico City. Students from three different field areas took English lessons in the same classroom and it is our belief that all of them can apply what they have learned in the English classroom, particularly vocabulary, in their respective fields of study[1].

Therefore, the objective of this research is to describe the application of a didactic sequence that proposes the creation of glossaries (using a variety of

[1] Indeed, one of the main students' concerns is that English is not related to their study field, and they would like to find a practical application for the language.

vocabulary learning techniques) for university students who belong to different BA programs. Moreover, through this manuscript, we would like to present students' opinions on the use of glossaries for learning vocabulary in a meaningful way in higher education.

In order to attain the research objective, the outline of this chapter is as follows: first, the research questions are formulated. Then, a section of theoretical explanations is presented. This section focuses on two main topics: the role that vocabulary plays in the teaching-learning process of a language and the importance of glossaries for learning vocabulary in context. Following that, all the methodological issues, such as the type of research, the context, and the steps of the didactic sequence, are explained. Afterwards, the results of the study are described. After that, there is a section focused on the discussion of the results, in which the study's main findings are contrasted to the theoretical elucidations of the experts. Finally, the conclusions drawn from this study are presented.

Research questions

Learning a language is a complex process which is in constant evolution, it is not something static. Therefore, all the skills should be taught in context, this includes vocabulary. Indeed, vocabulary should not be taught in isolation, as if it were a single subject which is not related to other linguistics skills (Davies & Pears, 2003). Thus, the present study addresses the following main research question:

- How can university students from different BA programs learn English language vocabulary that is related to their different BA subjects?

Once a didactic sequence focused on the use of glossaries and learning techniques for vocabulary development was implemented, the following secondary research question was raised:

- What is the opinion of students from different BA programs about the experience of elaborating glossaries in order to learn English?

Theoretical Explanations

The role of vocabulary in the English language teaching-learning process

Communication is usually achieved with the proper knowledge of the target language, i.e., phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Indeed, knowing a word involves knowing about its pronunciation, frequency of use, syntactic limitations (on its use), original form and derived forms, as well, and the different meanings associated with the term (Richards, 1976).

Thus, vocabulary is an essential part of the English language teaching-learning process. Indeed, vocabulary is considered as the foundation of the four basic skills of the language since knowing vocabulary assists learners to understand English and to communicate well in different written and spoken scenarios (Khaing, 2017).

For English language learners, learning vocabulary has been a very common and familiar topic. When they first learn the language, they are faced to learn vocabulary in many different ways. Ghazal lists the following strategies which are practiced by English learners: a) repeating a word in a written or spoken way, b) elaborating lists of words (with their corresponding meaning), c) guessing the meaning of a word based on the context and the cotext where it is used, d) identifying essential words for comprehension, e) activating background knowledge, f) using dictionaries, g) taking notes, h) using new words in different contexts, and so on (2007, p. 86).

Aitchison (1994) states that a learner goes through three different stages in vocabulary learning: a) labeling, b) packaging, and c) network building. For Laufer and Hulstijn (2001), noticing, elaboration, motivation, and need play an important role in the language learning process, in particular in vocabulary development. The authors affirm that, in order to operationalize these activities in vocabulary development, need (or motivation to learn a word), search (an actual activity to grasp the word), and evaluation (proving that a word is used in a context) must be combined.

Glossaries to learn vocabulary in context

A glossary is an alphabetically organized set of specific terms or words followed by their meaning, this could be a complete explanation or a simple translation (Glaister, 1960, p. 155). It is important to distinguish a glossary from a dictionary since the latter is supposed to cover all (or almost all) words of a language.

A glossary's main function is to provide reference definitions for relevant terms. The relevance of these terms is determined by the author of the glossary. Indeed, this series of words could belong to a particular semantic field, it could contain exclusively technical words that belong to a specific subject, it could be considered simply difficult or challenging to learn a topic of the target language or it could be essential and preeminent to understand a certain text.

According to Webb (2010, p. 202), glossing is a useful activity for language learners[2]. Glossing consists of providing meanings of specific words, that could be considered difficult, within a text. Therefore, "[g]lossaries are commonly found in books such as graded readers which are designed for language learners" (Webb, 2010, p. 202).

In the language teaching-learning process, Nation (2001) affirms that glossing is a very useful activity for three reasons: a) it allows learners to have access to all kinds of texts, b) it provides the meanings of words in order to facilitate vocabulary learning and draw attention to specific terms, c) the learner invests less time to read a text and understand it. It is our belief that using glossaries, English learners may increase their vocabulary, in particular the terms and expressions they are interested in.

As it has been stated, it is considered that if we ask our students to create glossaries based on texts of their interest, they can learn vocabulary (and English in general) in a more meaningful way. The fact of departing from a text of interest for them can be a good factor to trigger a specific need or motivation to learn a set of words, to make them search these words through different means so that they grasp meaningful terms, and assess where and how these terms are used, as Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) propose.

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[2] It can be used by foreign language learners and first language learners as well.

Methodology

As stated above, the fact of teaching English lessons for university students represents a challenge since it is very difficult to match all learners' fields of study. Consequently, one possible solution is to provide students with tools that they can use when they work with texts that are written in English. Clarke (2018) states, "[o]ne way of managing the challenge of incorporating vocabulary instruction into academic English courses is to provide students with independent vocabulary-learning tasks" (2018, p.319).

If the activities are meaningful for adult students, they might learn better. If students are able to choose the materials related to their particular domain of knowledge, they will be more interested in the activity. Indeed, Papathanasiou states that

> […] the possible reason in her research for which the adult beginners performed significantly better on unrelated vocabulary tests than on related vocabulary tests was the motivation of adults, who were highly motivated and more conscious learners for personal and professional reasons. Motivation has to do with the emotional dimension of L2 learning (2009, p.318).

Based on the Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) proposal[3], in this paper, it is assumed that if English language learners are asked to create glossaries that are related to their areas of interest, in concrete to their BA programs subjects, they can learn vocabulary in a more meaningful way. With the creation of a glossary, students will have a need or motivation to learn, they will be asked to search terms through different means, and they will be able to evaluate how words are used in specific contexts.

Type of study

For the realization of this study, we considered the action research methodology approach. This research is also known by other names such as *participatory research*, *collaborative inquiry*, *emancipatory research*, *action learning*, etc.

[3] The combination of *need*, *search*, and *evaluation*.

All the denominations state clearly that action research implies “learning by doing” (O’Brien, 2001).

In other terms, the fundamental nature of this approach consists of identifying a problem in a community, coming up with a plan to solve it, following that plan, and observing the results to evaluate them (O’Brien, 2001). That is exactly what we intend to do with the didactic sequence we propose to our participating students.

Following Saint-Luc (2014, pp. 5-6), through this intervention, i.e., didactic sequence, we seek to transform a reality with the purpose of improving it. Even if we did not apply a regular diagnostic instrument, we could identify certain insufficiencies in the reading comprehension competences of the participating students as well as their discontent and frustration with the English subject since it was of no help to the other subjects of their BA programs.

Based on this, we set ourselves the task of planning a didactic sequence that would allow us to help students build up vocabulary. Based on Laufer and Hulstijn’s (2001) proposal, we suggested the creation of a glossary, so that students could learn vocabulary from their different areas of interest.

Context of the study

This research was carried out at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa with seven students who at the moment of the study were enrolled in a three-level language course at UAM-I[4]. This level course corresponds to A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Most students belong to different careers and volunteered participate in this study. This research was carried out completely online on the verge of the COVID-19 lockdown. A synthesis of the characteristics of the participants of our study is presented in Table 1.

[4] Since this study was voluntary, the sample size was not predetermined. Thus, there were only seven students who decided to be part of this.

Student	Age	B. A	Studies another langue	Interests
A	21	Linguistics	Yes, French	Read in English to learn about linguistics because there are not many translated books into Spanish. Interested in Linguistics, especially discourse analysis.
B	21	Computer Science	No, would like to learn Japanese	Travelling and learning English to get better jobs.
C	21	Physics	Yes, Japanese	Read in English due to most books in his study field are not translated into Spanish. Study English for better job opportunities in the future, to get a scholarship in a foreign country and for the information available in that language.
D	20	Sociology	No	No information was provided.
E	20	Food engineering	No	Toxicology and food safety in food companies. Thinks that English is the key to many job opportunities. Interested in working in an international company.
F	20	Management	No	Get better job opportunities in the future. Interested in working abroad.
G	19	Management	No	Interested in marketing and in working with people from other countries. Travelling.

Table 1. General characteristics of the study subjects.

Furthermore, all students had previously worked with glossaries in the previous course with one of the researchers. However, the aspects to include in the prior glossary were established by the teacher. On this occasion, there were only some suggestions made, however, the main goal of the whole sequence was to create a glossary based on their needs and interests.

Stages of the intervention

The intervention or didactic sequence we implemented for the participants of the study was constituted by five stages. A first meeting was held a few days before the intervention started. This meeting was held to explain the different stages of this research and the purpose of it. All stages of the research were explained to the possible participants. Even if more than a dozen students from different BA programs were invited to participate in this study, only seven students decided to be part of this research.

The intervention was carried out for a specific period, in concrete one week, since this was a brief didactic sequence that we would like to implement in the future with a more considerable number of students from the aforementioned university. The stages that were proposed for the intervention are the following:

First stage

Participants were exposed to three different vocabulary techniques that belong to the Dual-Coding Theory (DCT). According to Carter (1990 in Lahuerta & Pujol, 1996), a successful English language learner will work with a variety of techniques to get an effective assimilation of words. For the purpose of this research, we taught three cognitive techniques, as Clarke (2018) suggested, these are the Loci Method, Vocabulary Notebook, and the Semantic Mapping. These methods have proven to be effective in previous studies, (cf. Ahour & Berenji, 2015; Dubiner, 2017; Badr & Abu-Ayyash, 2019). These techniques were taught in an online lesson and a blog with the information of these methods was used for this purpose, as it can be observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Example of the blog to teach different vocabulary techniques.

With these methods, students are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning. The idea of the designing glossaries is to encourage students' autonomy because the glossaries are personal, no glossary will be identical to another one. According to Moe and De Beni (2005 in Ahour & Berenji, 2015), the *Loci Method*, the first technique we applied in this research, involves "creating an image for each item to be remembered or if applied to passages, for each cue-word corresponding to a concept" (p. 1453).

This *Loci Method* is considered as a prompt in which words to be learned are related to a particular image. "Each word is associated in some way with one of the items in the visual image, and the image is used to assist in the recall of the words" (Imama & Munfangati, 2017, p. 342).

The second vocabulary technique we applied with our participating students is the *Vocabulary Notebook*. Kanellopoulou et al. (2019) state that more successful learning is achieved when there is a combination of verbal associations and visual imagery[5].

[5] The verbal associations refer to all the linguistic information such as the sentences and the paragraphs, whereas the visual imagery corresponds to symbols, pictures or videos (Kanellopoulou et al., 2019, p.2).

On the other hand, Schmitt and Schmitt (1995 in Dubiner, 2017) state that learners should get to know different aspects of words, work on a deep and rich semantic processing, put emphasis on the remembering of words and use a method for recycling new vocabulary (p.156). It is desirable to consider receptive and productive aspects to learn and retain new words or chunks of language to be included in vocabulary notebooks[6].

On the other hand, Nation (2001) also says that the productive knowledge and use of a word involves a correct pronunciation including stress, correct spelling, be able to use the right parts in appropriate forms, produce the word to express the meaning, produce the words in different contexts; synonyms and antonyms, formality, occurrence, and so on (p. 28).

The third technique we applied to our group was *Semantic Mapping*. This technique is used in order to activate the prior knowledge of English language learners. Its main goal is "to assist the students to develop their background knowledge (schemata) by mapping words related to the given topic" (Kasim & Wahyuni, 2016, p. 47).

With this technique, students are intended to collect and organize information through brainstorming. In this case, they must remember what they have learned previously about a particular topic, search for words that are associated to the topic and try to find relationships of the words drawing a mental map. According to Kasim and Wahyuni (2016), all these activities help our learners improve their vocabulary and their searching skills, in particular to discover the meaning of words based on the context.

Second stage

During this stage, learners were asked to search for a text of their respective BA programs and that was of their preference to work with during the intervention. This is a way students can be motivated to read texts without being forced.

[6] Nation (2001) states that "knowing a word involves form, meaning and use" (p.26), and some aspects he mentions about the receptive knowledge are the following: recognize a word when it is heard, when it is written; its parts, the meaning, the particular context where has just occurred, related words, collocations, if it is pejorative or uncommon, among others.

Indeed, Díaz Barriga and Hernández (2010) recognize that one of the main problems of students is their lack of motivation, and low acceptance of reading the suggested texts chosen by teachers. A suggestion is to let students choose the texts they would like to read (Díaz Barriga & Hernández, 2010. p.266).

Third stage

At this stage, students were asked to analyze the three different vocabulary techniques, make a reflection about their characteristics, and design their own glossaries. The objective of not imposing a single glossary prototype is for participants to suggest what they believe will be most useful to them. Participants are given the freedom to choose whether to create their glossaries by hand or digitally; in a table or with a design application such as Canva.

Although one of the main characteristics of glossaries is that they should be presented in alphabetical order, in this particular case, our participants were not asked to do it so for greater practicality depending on their needs (and the appearance of words in their texts). Therefore, the number of words corresponding to each letter of the alphabet depends on the terms they choose to work on for their glossaries.

Fourth stage

In this phase of the intervention, learners were invited to use reading techniques such as making predictions about the content of the text, using top-down processing models that required making predictions or inferences based on information from the title, images, etc.

Moreover, in order to have a better understanding of the text, participants were asked to prepare a set of questions based on the text they chose. Furthermore, learners were asked to answer to those questions. Díaz Barriga and Hernández (2010) state the following: “la estrategia de evaluación ocurre recursivamente durante la comprensión, bajo formas como autointerrogación” (p.253). Indeed, these two last activities (to ask and answer a series of questions) let us determine if the participants of the study really understood the text they selected to read.

Besides the first set of questions, for teacher-researchers to check the participants' comprehension, each student had to prepare a second set of questions as well as a debate question that were going to be asked at the end of an oral presentation students prepared in the last stage of our didactic sequence.

Fifth stage

After creating their glossaries, students were asked to make a 15-20-minute oral presentation in English about their corresponding texts, and participants were asked to use a visual aid to remember the content of their presentation. It could be a conceptual map or a slideshow presentation. At the end of each presentation, students were asked to pose the questions they had prepared in the fourth stage.

The oral presentation of this stage and the questions they formulated in the previous stage let us determine if our participants learned specialized vocabulary from their texts through the techniques they were taught in the didactic sequence and all the activities they carried out.

At the end of the didactic sequence, a survey was conducted to know our participants' opinion about the intervention. The survey was constituted of twelve questions, five of them were closed and the other seven were open. In general terms, the first questions were about if they liked the didactic sequence and if so, what they liked the most about it.

Likewise, they were asked to comment on the proposal of creating glossaries based on a trigger text; the elements they decided to include in their glossaries; how they considered the concrete activity of the glossaries, and if they planned to implement it in the future even if they were not asked to do it.

Finally, the rest of the questions were about the time they took to do all the activities; if they had any suggestions to improve any activity and the complete process of the intervention. The questions also focused on their opinion about learning a little about their peers' topics. The final question asked them if they had another comment about the whole intervention.

Results of the study

In this section of the chapter, results of our intervention will be described in detail. All the stages of the didactic sequence will be reconsidered, so that we can describe exhaustively what happened in each intervention phase.

First stage

In an online meeting, participants were exposed to the three abovementioned vocabulary techniques (DTC methods): *Loci Method*, *Vocabulary Notebook*, and the *Semantic Mapping*. Links of the three techniques were presented in a blog, so that they could check them whenever they had time to do so. Students were asked to review all the techniques by themselves and ask questions to the teacher in case they had some doubts about them.

In another online meeting, students were asked to reveal what elements they would include in their glossaries, and the reason to choose them. Some answers obtained were drawings, collocations, synonyms and antonyms, pronunciation, context, and types of words. Some of the reasons mentioned by our participants were that drawings would make them remember the concepts better; some others thought that collocations are fundamental knowing when to use a word appropriately; others thought that antonyms and synonyms would help them to relate words better and increase their vocabulary even more.

Second stage

As it was stated in the Methodology section (in the description of the stages), learners were asked to choose one text from their corresponding BA programs, so that we could link the English subject to other subjects of their careers. It is believed that this is a good way to implement transversal education[7].

[7] Transversal education is understood as the connection made evident between the subjects and competences of any educational level. This connection is not obvious. Therefore, it is usually up to teachers to establish it in order to prioritize the development of interdisciplinary competences among their students through collaborative work and new types of student assessments (Hénard, 2010, p. 36).

Once students chose their texts, they were asked to read them carefully and identify not only the unknown words, but also those terms they consider important for their study field. This activity was crucial, so that they could create their respective glossaries in the following stage.

The main topics of the texts that students proposed were the following: toxicology in food, narcopolitics and feminicides; dark matter and light; the model S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. proposed by a linguist; employee training and development; an introduction to JavaScript[8].

Third stage

A third meeting was held to see participants› doubts and advances. Students were asked to explain the terms they decided to include in their glossaries. Students did not have troubles in general at this stage. Some doubts of students were what collocations were, for example. Another student asked for the number of words the glossary should include. Obviously, the number of words depended on their needs and interests.

As it was mentioned in the methodology section, participants were asked to make a glossary of unknown words and relevant terms from the text they were working on previously. Even if some aspects were suggested to constitute their glossaries, such as pronunciation, context, drawings, etc., it was decided not to give learners a specific format, so that they could add all the elements they found useful, participants were also encouraged to be creative in the design of their glossaries.

[8] The specific titles are a) "Toxicology in food" by Lolessh Kumar Mishera (2018) in *Introductory Food Toxicology*. Daya Publishing House; b) Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-U.S. Border. *Signs*, 36, 707-31; c) "From Dark Matter to Light" by Cowen, R. (2008) in *Science News*. Retrieved from https://www.sciencenews.org/article/dark-matter-light; d) "What is S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G?" by Hymes (in a compilation); e) *What Is Employee Training and Development?* Retrieved from https://www.td.org/talent-development-glossary-terms/what-is-employee-training-and-development; f) "An introduction to JavaScript" in *The Modern JavaScript Tutorial*. Retrieved from https://javascript.info/intro.

Table 2 shows an example of a glossary. As it can be observed, participant A decided to create a glossary consisting of six columns: a) the relevant term, b) the meaning, c) the pronunciation presenting the word's corresponding phonetic transcription according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)[9], d) the translation in Spanish, e) the lexical category, f) a list of possible collocations displayed in complete sentences.

Word	Meaning	Pronunciation	Translation	Form	Collocations
Speech	• A formal talk that someone gives to a group of people • Someone's ability to talk, or an example of someone talking	/spitʃ/	Discurso	Noun	• It was the teacher who had to draft the graduation speech. • His speech was very slow and difficult to understand. • The groom usually makes a speech at the wedding reception.
Analysis	• The process of analyzing something • A detailed exam nation of something (a sentence, a chemical compoun d, *etc.*) *especially* by breaking it up into the parts of which it is made up	/əˈnæl·ə·sɪs/	Análisis	Noun	• A sample of soil was sent for analysis. • We sent the sample to the laboratory for analysis. • She is carrying out a close analysis of the situation.
Language	• The words used by the people of a country or region • Communication using words	/ˈlæŋ·gwɪdʒ/	Lenguaje	Noun, countable -uncounta ble	• How many languages do you speak? • The way that children's language develops is fascinating.

Table 2. Example of a glossary created by one of the participants.

Figure 2 displays another example of a glossary that was created by participant D through slides. In the superior part of the slide, the main term is centered.

[9] The main function of this alphabet consists of providing an accurate system to transcribe the sounds of speech, independently of any language and, at the same time, pertinent and valid to all languages. This can help any reader to have an appropriate pronunciation of a language by virtue of the standard symbols (Alvarado & Cruz Rizza, 2016, p. 85).

Figure 2. Example of the first part of a glossary created by participant D.

Then, the learner uses an image that corresponds to the term and adds some words that are semantically related to the main term. In the inferior part of the slide, there are five boxes, the first one presents the definition of the word, the second one the translation in Spanish, the third one displays the (simulated) pronunciation as the student perceives it; the fourth one shows the word›s lexical category; the final box corresponds to an example in which the word is used in context.

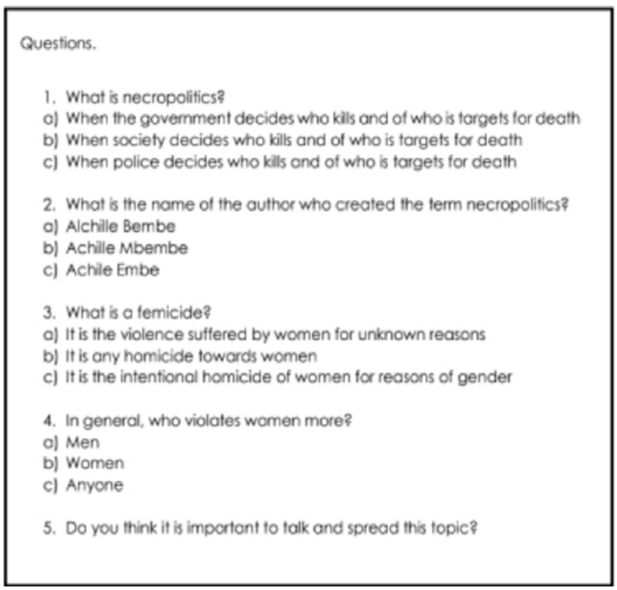
Figure 3 shows another example of a glossary created by participants F and G, who belong to the same BA program. In this glossary, the terms are displayed in the form of a list. The glossary is constituted by five columns: a) *word*, where the term is shown; b) *meaning*, where students put the corresponding translation; c) *pronunciation*, this means the way they perceive the word is pronounced; d) *context*, where they present a sentence in which they use the term; e) *picture*, an image that is strongly related to the term.

Employee training and development					
	Word	Meaning	Pronunciation	Context	Picture
1	Knowledge	Conocimiento	Naolech	Employee training and development includes any activity that helps employees acquire new, or improve existing, knowledge or skills.	
2	Mentoring	- Tutoría. - Asesoría. - Orientación.	Meentoring	Training is one specific and common form of employee development; other forms include coaching,	

Figure 3. Example of a glossary created by participants F and G.

Fourth stage

As it was mentioned in the methodology, after the creation of glossaries, learners were asked to prepare three questions about the content of the presentation to ask them to their peers after the oral presentation. They also had to formulate a question in order to hold a small debate among all the participants of the study. Figure 4 shows a concrete example of a set of questions made by participant D. Based on the text chosen, the participant made multiple-choice questions and an open question for debate.



Questions.

1. What is necropolitics?
a) When the government decides who kills and of who is targets for death
b) When society decides who kills and of who is targets for death
c) When police decides who kills and of who is targets for death

2. What is the name of the author who created the term necropolitics?
a) Alchille Bembe
b) Achille Mbembe
c) Achile Embe

3. What is a femicide?
a) It is the violence suffered by women for unknown reasons
b) It is any homicide towards women
c) It is the intentional homicide of women for reasons of gender

4. In general, who violates women more?
a) Men
b) Women
c) Anyone

5. Do you think it is important to talk and spread this topic?

Figure 4. Example of comprehension questions made by participant D.

Figure 5 shows another set of comprehension questions made by participant E who studies Food Engineering. In this activity, she made true-false questions mostly and a few open questions. The participant translated her questions to Spanish.

Preguntas con respuesta.

1. How is food toxicology defined?
Cómo se define la toxicología de alimentos?

R = It is defined as a science that studies various chemical substances present in food.
Se define como una ciencia que estudia diversas sustancias químicas presente en los alimentos.

2. Substances that are toxic to the body can be naturally present in the food or generated through chemical reactions.
¿True or false?

Las sustancias tóxicas para el organismo pueden estar presentes de forma natural en el alimento o generarse bajo reacciones químicas.
¿Cierto o falso?
R = True
Cierto

3. In the period from 1850 to 1970, food industrialization introduced adulteration processes.
¿True or false?
En el periodo de 1850 a 1970 la industrialización alimentaria introdujo procesos de adulteración.
¿Cierto o falso?

R = False, it was in 1860 to 1920
Falso, fue en 1860 a 1920

Figure 5. Example of comprehension questions made by student E.

Figure 6 shows the questions student E would pose to their peers after giving her presentation. In this case, she sent her questions in Spanish because she thought that her partners would answer better in Spanish. The main idea of understanding a text is not the use of the target language, but the comprehension of the text in question.

1. What is the most common poisoning?
2. What are the characteristics of natural toxins?
3. What is the name given to natural toxins in seafood?
4. What are flatulence promoters?
5. What are antinutrients?
6. What are Xanthines and where are they found?
7. What is the function of alkaloids?
8. What is the function of nitrites and nitrates?
9. What is the negative effect of Sucralose in the organism?
10. What are the symptoms of arsenic contamination?

Figure 6. Example of questions for partners made by student E[10].

[10] Questions translated to English.

Two results of this stage were obtained: students showed a deep understanding of their texts as they employed some reading comprehension techniques, such as activating their previous knowledge of the topic and making questions to the text.

Fifth stage

Students gave oral presentations to explain their topics. We considered that this final stage of the didactic sequence was crucial, since it represented the perfect occasion to practice the vocabulary they searched for during the creation of the glossary.

Previously to the presentations, some questions from students were received via email, a student was insecure about his presentation saying that he felt nervous as it was the first time, he would present something related to his study field area, he wanted to be as clear as possible.

Most students gave brief presentations, however, one of the students took 40 minutes to give her full presentation including the answers. During the presentations most students answered the questions of their partners, some of them spoke Spanish during their interventions. However, the main objective of this intervention was not the complete use of English in their presentations.

Some topics were easier to grasp than others. For example, the presentation *From Dark Matter to Light* was complicated for most students and they had problems when justifying the answers to the questions the participant posed, this was due to the complexity of the topic. However, all the participants were respectful and patient with their peers.

Figure 7 shows a concrete example of a visual aid used by participant D in her oral presentation. The general impression and reception of this activity was good. Students seemed to be motivated and engaged in their presentations and showed interest in the other participants' presentations. Besides, all the learners took an active role when they were listeners, since they knew that at the end, they would answer some questions about the topic presented.

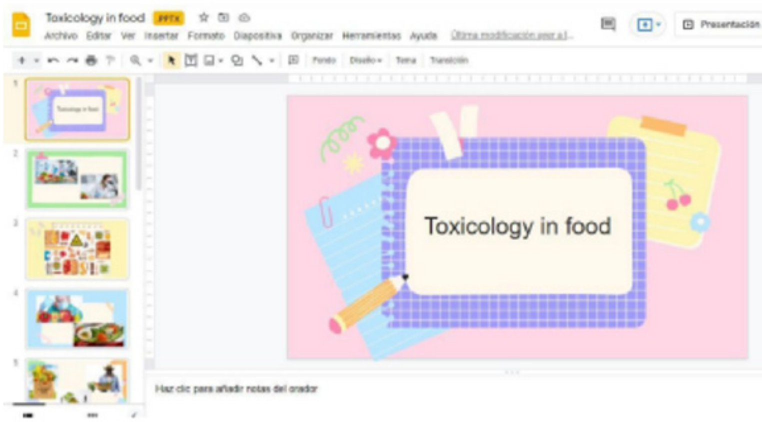


Figure 7. Example of visual aid for the oral presentation made by participant E.

At this stage, some students spoke Spanish because they were really interested in their classmates' topics. It was interesting to see the reaction of students as they really enjoyed the activity of learning from their peers' majors. It must be noted that the original plan was that all students made their presentation on the same day; however, it was not possible, and another session was needed.

In a class with more students, it would be appropriate to ask students to record their presentations and make an online forum so that the other participants watch them and answer their questions asynchronously. This activity can be modified based on the number of students and the time we have for the class. Nevertheless, the valuable matter is the creation of glossaries, the increasing of vocabulary, and the learning of mnemonic techniques that can be applied to other language courses from this point on.

When writing this paper, three 25-student groups of the aforementioned university have received the information of mnemonic techniques and are working on glossaries from texts and conferences. As it was previously mentioned, this activity can be adapted according to the context and needs of students.

Results of the survey

Once the intervention ended, we decided to conduct a survey in order to know if the idea of creating glossaries was of help for the participants involved in the study, and if so, to what extent. A synthesis of the answers to each one of the questions of the survey will be commented on the following paragraphs.

The first questions asked if participants felt a motivation to select a text related to their BA programs in order to learn vocabulary. All of them asserted they were motivated by being able to choose the topic, and more particularly the text that constituted the trigger document in order to create the glossary and, thus, learn English in a more meaningful way.

Additionally, six out of seven learners manifested they had the impression to have learned a considerable amount of vocabulary related to their particular domain of knowledge, exactly as Papathanasiou (2009: 318) mentions, it is the case in adult English language learners. Only one of the participants hesitated about this and expressed that maybe he learned some vocabulary related to his field of study.

Regarding the questions about if they enjoyed the activity, all the participants stated they did and would like it to be implemented in their regular English lessons. In particular, what they liked the most about the experience was the freedom they had to choose the topic and the text they were going to work on. They also liked the fact that no specific format to create their glossaries was imposed. Therefore, they could use their creativity to do so according to their needs and interests. This can be observed in the answers below (1-3).

1. Me gustó aplicar mi creatividad en la realización del vocabulario y disfrutar el proceso de aprendizaje. [Participant C]
2. Leer un artículo de mi interés con el propósito de sacar más vocabulario. [Participant D]
3. Hablar de mi tema, investigar más a fondo acerca de él, buscar la pronunciación de las palabras. [Participant E]

Concerning the proposal of creating a glossary based on the trigger document they decided to work on, all the participants revealed that glossaries are a useful tool to learn languages and all of them said that they would like the implementation of this activity in a regular class, and they will continue to do so on their own, even if they are not asked to. One participant suggested the class should not lose contact with the main topics of the English curriculum. Some comments about the aforementioned proposal of the glossary activity are shown below (4-6).

4. Está genial porque uno puede guardar todos los glosarios hechos y juntarlos para repasarlos día a día y así mejorar. [Participant A]
5. Me gustó, disfruté mucho de hacerlo, aprendí que dependiendo del contexto las palabras pueden cambiar de significado. Además de ampliar mi conocimiento en un tema que me interesa. [Participant C]
6. Bastante buena pero tal vez, para las clases, debería poner un límite de palabras y hacer que los alumnos no pierdan el contacto con los temas en inglés. [Participant D]

As a concrete situation that happened here, we must inform about a problem that a participant reported. She said that she found it difficult to find the right definition of some words. Specifically, she wanted to find the translation of the word *discourse*. She stated that it was very difficult because she did not understand the difference between *discourse* and *speech*. Therefore, she invested a lot of time to do deeper research about the exact meaning and use of both terms.

In relation to the content, participants decided to include in their glossaries, all of them took into account the definition in English, its translation in Spanish, the pronunciation of the term (according to the IPA or to their own intuition about how the word was pronounced), and the context where the term can be used in a sentence. Five out of seven participants also considered images or drawings. One out of seven participants included synonyms and antonyms. Lastly, one out of seven incorporated the lexical category of the term.

With reference to their opinion about learning a little about their peers' topics through the oral presentation of their glossaries and the whole experience, all the participants expressed this was interesting, since this activity not only produces new knowledge, but it also generates an exchange of information, thoughts, and experiences. Some comments and opinions about the oral presentation are displayed below (7-9).

7. Una buena idea, porque es interesante conocer los temas que ven en otras carreras y abrir un espacio para el intercambio de conocimientos, opiniones y experiencias. [Participant C]
8. Es muy interesante porque son temas que nosotros no vemos o no estudiamos muy a fondo y que alguien te lo explique de una forma breve está muy bien, hay un nuevo conocimiento. [Participant B]
9. Me pareció muy interesante porque como todos somos de distintas licenciaturas y teníamos una libre elección me gustó que cada uno escogiera lo que más nos gustaba. [Participant E]

About how the intervention could improve, most participants mentioned the time. Some of them suggested that the oral presentations could have been briefer. Another participant suggested to have more time to do all the activities. Finally, most of them suggested that English language teachers should integrate this activity in their regular lessons. Some of the participants' comments can be observed in (10-12).

10. Yo creo que el tiempo de las exposiciones, que sean breves. [Participant B]
11. Quizás tener más tiempo, considero que tener dos o tres semanas para realizar el vocabulario y la exposición serían suficientes. [Participant C]
12. Me gustaría que esta actividad se implementara en la clase, es una forma de aprender que a mí me ayudó mucho [Participant E]

Discussion of the Findings

Once the intervention and the answers provided by the seven participants of the study were described, we believe that our didactic sequence represented a challenge for our English language learners. As Clarke (2018, p. 319) recommends, we tried to incorporate a vocabulary-learning task in which our students had to make decisions by themselves and learned without being in front of a teacher all the time. Therefore, we consider this task promoted autonomy[11] among our participants.

[11] "[A]utonomy in language learning [is] about people taking more control over the purposes for which they learn languages and the ways in which they learn them" (Benson, 2006).

Furthermore, we consider that several strategies from Ghazal's (2007, p. 86) list were implemented by our participating students in the didactic sequence, i.e., elaborating lists of words with their corresponding meaning (and even more elements), determining the meaning of a word based on its use in a text, identifying essential words for comprehension, activating background knowledge, using dictionaries (and other means), using new words in different contexts, just to name a few.

As it is appreciated in the above comments, we can affirm that we followed Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) proposal, and the didactic sequence succeeded. Indeed, the whole intervention was considered highly motivating by our participants not only because they could choose the topic and the text they were going to work on during the sequence (*need*), but also because they discovered different techniques to look for new words and terms (*search*) and created sentences in which they could use all this terminology (*evaluation*). Moreover, they were able to register the connections that new vocabulary can make with other terms and expressions they already know.

Furthermore, participants discovered that they could create their own meaningful materials without depending on the English language teacher's instructions to do so. Additionally, they could develop autonomy and creativity in the creation of the glossary with the specific content they considered helpful according to their needs and interests. We agree with Akinwamide (2012, p. 37) about the idea that creativity triggers learning, improves self-esteem and confidence in our English language learners. All this can lead to genuine communication and cooperation in the classroom.

It is important to mention that the glossary by itself is not enough for students to learn new vocabulary. Once students have completed the glossary, it is essential they use the words they have just learned. Thus, in our didactic sequence, we thought that this could be achieved through an oral presentation. Moreover, this was a good way of sharing knowledge and understanding of what they all experienced in the creation of their glossaries.

In this research, the participants of the study showed pleasure in each phase of the study, since for them it meant perfecting a learning technique that they can use in the future. Since this was a study with volunteer students, no grade was given and there was no pressure to achieve a grade, this allowed the participants to work for the pleasure of learning.

We suggest the making of glossaries from the beginning of the courses, the students may modify the aspects to be included in their glossaries throughout the course, it is suggested to monitor the making of the activity and be flexible with the changes students may suggest along the process. It is recommended that teachers create glossaries along with their students so that they can experience first-hand the advantages and possible challenges of this vocabulary learning technique. It is highly recommended to see the development of glossaries more as a process than as an end.

The main limitation of this research is it never had a stage of making vocabulary test to measure receptive and productive learning as Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) suggest. However, there were activities that allowed learners to activate the two stages such as the questions and answers activity. Moreover, in order to make the task, learners needed to comprehend the text first and activate receptive and productive learning then, even if the specific unknown words were not in their questions or answers they were in the process itself.

At the time of writing this report, the glossaries have been implemented with subtitled videos, not only with texts. In this way, students have access to other text genres, and other types of language. It is an activity that can be adapted to many contexts, languages and learner needs. Six months after the research was completed, students who are still studying languages were asked if they use glossaries and one out of two learners still uses them in the foreign language classes.

Conclusions

This section of the paper is dedicated to the conclusions of our study. Based on the first research question that asks about how university students that belong to different BA programs can learn English language vocabulary that is related to their different subjects, we can say the following. On the one hand, if students are able to choose a text and work on it using different vocabulary techniques, including the creation of glossaries, they can learn terminology related to other subjects from their BA programs. Moreover, they not only embrace the opportunity of choosing a topic of their interest but also learning about their study field.

On the other hand, glossaries are perceived by students to be a good resource for increasing vocabulary, they are not simple lists of words to memorize. They include different aspects of words, and it is a good way to make connections between words, meanings, context use, and pronunciation.

Concerning the second research question of the study that focuses on the opinion of the students about the didactic sequence, all the participants expressed that they liked the experience. First, they learned different techniques to improve their vocabulary. Then, they found glossaries useful to learn English and all they would like to have this activity in a regular class of the English subject. Finally, they found the oral presentations interesting since it was a good way to generate an exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among all the participants.

Based on the didactic sequence, the results of the study, and the opinions of the participants, the fact of proposing the creation of glossaries is a good idea to learn vocabulary in context. Nevertheless, the concrete proposal must be preceded by text comprehension activities, and followed by production activities, such as the ones we proposed in our didactic sequence[12].

Finally, we consider important to carry out more action research in the English language classroom. Certainly, it is imperative to propose a more extensive variety of practical tools, such as glossaries. We believe that such tools could be of great use to help university students to link the vocabulary (or any other skill) they learn to an assortment of English language written (or spoken) texts of their interest.

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[12] Indeed, the main idea is to depart from a trigger written text which is of interest for the student. Afterwards, some reading comprehension activities can be proposed. Subsequently, the creation of glossaries can be followed. Finally, an oral or written production stage would be ideal to close the didactic sequence.

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Desarrollo y desempeño del alumno con síndrome de Asperger en el aprendizaje del inglés dentro del salón de clase promedio

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Resumen

La enseñanza del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera (LE) se considera obligatoria en la educación básica de México, instaurándose en la educación pública a finales de la década de los noventa en algunos estados (Castañedo y Davies, 2004). Sin embargo, son escasos los estudios sobre la enseñanza del inglés en las aulas mexicanas, sus diversos contextos sociales, sus políticas y programas, quiénes son los actores, entre otros temas (Ramírez, 2020). Más escasos aún son los estudios sobre la situación de alumnos con necesidades especiales que se integran a las aulas regulares. En el presente trabajo, describimos la situación de tres estudiantes diagnosticados con trastorno del espectro autista, específicamente Síndrome de Asperger (DSM-V, 2013), en su aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en un salón de clase promedio. En nuestra metodología, llevamos registros sobre el desempeño de los participantes dentro del salón de clase, analizamos cómo influye este desempeño en su aprendizaje, en la enseñanza de los maestros y en el comportamiento de toda la clase. Asimismo, analizamos la competencia del inglés de los tres participantes para determinar sus habilidades y necesidades, y así poder diseñar métodos de enseñanza e inclusión que los ayuden a aprender una LE de manera eficaz.

Palabras clave: *enseñanza de una segunda lengua, aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, aprendizaje del inglés, trastorno del espectro autista, síndrome de Asperger.*

Introducción

La enseñanza del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera (LE) se considera obligatoria en la educación básica de México, instaurándose en la educación pública a finales de la década de los noventa en algunos estados (Castañedo y Davies, 2004). Con la instauración del Programa Nacional de inglés para la Educación Básica (PNIEB) en el estado de Chihuahua desde 2009, el cual incluye el idioma inglés como parte del diseño curricular en escuelas primarias (http://pnieb.sepbcs.gob.mx), la mayoría de los estudiantes del estado son capaces de graduarse de cualquier nivel educativo con el conocimiento de otro idioma, en este caso, el inglés. Sin embargo, son escasos los estudios sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés en las aulas mexicanas, así como los diversos contextos sociales de quienes componen el contexto educativo, las políticas y programas que se siguen, entre otros temas (Ramírez, 2020). Más escasos aún son los estudios sobre la situación de alumnos con necesidades especiales que se integran a las aulas regulares. Hablando de casos en particular, nos referimos a estudiantes con un trastorno del espectro autista o un trastorno generalizado del desarrollo. Por ello, es importante considerar los aspectos cognitivos, sociales y de aprendizaje que caracterizan a estos alumnos. Asimismo, debemos tomar en cuenta las políticas y estrategias de inclusión y enseñanza que el gobierno utiliza para facilitar una educación apropiada para estos individuos (Avitia et al., 2013), en caso de haberlas.

En el presente trabajo, describimos la situación de tres estudiantes diagnosticados con trastorno del espectro autista, específicamente Síndrome de Asperger (DSM-V, 2013), en su aprendizaje del inglés como una lengua extranjera en un salón de clase promedio o regular, durante los años 2013 y 2014. Tratamos de averiguar qué tan difícil es para un estudiante con limitaciones de aprendizaje y rasgos específicos de socialización aprender inglés dentro de un aula común (sin maestros de apoyo o adecuaciones). Por tanto, nuestro objetivo principal de investigación fue el siguiente: determinar si un alumno con TEA, específicamente Síndrome de Asperger, puede aprender un segundo idioma y hasta qué punto puede hacerlo dentro de un salón de clases regular, considerando sus rasgos característicos como individuos con TEA: problemas en el lenguaje y la comunicación, dificultades en las relaciones y roles sociales, e intereses y patrones de conducta restringidos.

Para alcanzar nuestro objetivo, hicimos registros sobre el desarrollo y desempeño de estos estudiantes dentro del salón de clase y cómo estos influyen no sólo en su aprendizaje, sino también en la enseñanza de los maestros y el comportamiento de toda la clase. Después de los registros, examinamos el aprendizaje y mejora del idioma inglés en los tres participantes para determinar sus habilidades, flaquezas y necesidades como individuos con un trastorno del espectro autista que están aprendiendo un segundo idioma. De tal manera, sentamos las bases teóricas y prácticas para el diseño de métodos de enseñanza e inclusión que los ayuden a aprender un segundo idioma de la mejor manera posible dentro de un salón de clase "promedio".

Marco teórico-referencial

De acuerdo con el DSM-V (2013), los trastornos del neuro-desarrollo, entre los cuales se incluye al Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA), se manifiestan durante la primera infancia, usualmente antes de que inicie la etapa escolar del individuo. Se presenta en 1 de cada 110 individuos, cuatro veces con mayor frecuencia en niños que en niñas (Avitia, Jácquez, Quezada, Quintana, Valencia, 2013). El diagnóstico de un individuo con TEA también puede estar relacionado con la cultura, ya que muchos factores sociales y socioeconómicos influyen en la etapa de diagnóstico y reconocimiento de un TEA (DSM-V, 2013).

Entre las principales características del TEA, se encuentran las interacciones sociales y comunicativas anormales como comportamientos comunicativos no verbales usados en la interacción social, habilidades deficientes para desarrollar, mantener y comprender roles sociales, además de la presencia de comportamientos, intereses y actividades muy restringidos (DSM-V, 2013). Además, muchos individuos con TEA poseen una deficiencia intelectual o lingüística. Incluso aquellos cuyo coeficiente intelectual se considera dentro del promedio o elevado tienen problemas con ciertos tipos de actividades (DSM-V, 2013).

Aunque no se ha planteado un conjunto de causas posibles para el desarrollo o adquisición del autismo, Wing (en Avitia et al., 2013) comenta que una de las razones puede deberse a la diversidad de comportamientos, niveles de alteración y las necesidades específicas diferentes de cada individuo. Puesto que los síntomas del TEA aparecen durante la primera infancia (DSM-V, 2013), la mayoría de los individuos mejoran su conducta durante el crecimiento con avances en sus interacciones sociales, sobre todo, en la adolescencia. Aunque no se considera un trastorno degenerativo, sólo pocos individuos con TEA u otro o un Trastorno Generalizado del Desarrollo (TGD) pueden vivir y trabajar independientemente durante la edad adulta (DSM-V, 2013).

El Síndrome de Asperger (SA, en adelante) forma parte del conjunto de trastornos del neurodesarrollo que conforman el TEA, puesto que las características que el DSM-V (2013) describe son señaladas con el uso de especificadores dentro del espectro autista, junto a especificadores que describen los síntomas autistas. Sin embargo, se encuentra en el extremo del continuo como un autismo de alto funcionamiento. Esto indica que, a diferencia de otras formas de trastornos del neuro-desarrollo, los individuos con SA no poseen un retraso en el lenguaje o en su desarrollo cognitivo. Por tanto, un individuo ahora recibe una diagnosis de Trastorno del Espectro Autista sin una deficiencia intelectual o lingüística (DSM-V, 2013), aunque hoy en día se le sigue llamando típicamente Síndrome de Asperger. Aparentemente, el habla y el léxico no se ven afectados en los individuos con SA (Walensk et al., 2006 en Berko & Bernstein, 2010), aunque los procesos mentales abstractos del lenguaje parecen estar ausentes.

Sin embargo, las alteraciones en la interacción social y la comunicación en el diagnóstico de un TEA sí se aprecian en los individuos con SA. Sus dificultades para comunicarse pueden deberse a sus dificultades para comprender señales no verbales o debido a un autocontrol limitado de la persona (DSM-IV-TR 2002). Muchos investigadores están de acuerdo en que las limitaciones lingüísticas en el autismo se encuentran principalmente en el aspecto pragmático, o sea, en el significado de lo que se dice y cómo se dice en un contexto comunicativo específico (Ellis, 1994), en el procesamiento de una conversación y los contextos sociales (Berko y Bernstein, 2010).

Las limitaciones en las habilidades sociales no indican que el individuo con SA no desea mantener contacto con otras personas, lo que ocurre es que les hacen falta las herramientas necesarias y las habilidades comunicativas para realizarlo (Cererlos, 2011). Cuando no puede inferir el sentido o contexto de una conversación, la persona con SA se siente confundida, desconcertada y, por lo tanto, marginada (Cererlos, 2011). De acuerdo con la Asociación Asperger Argentina, la mayor parte de las veces los individuos con SA no están muy interesados en lo que otros tienen que decir y tienen problemas para mantener una conversación larga. Cuando se confunden, simplemente cambian el tema. También es común que los niños con SA tengan una mejor relación con los adultos que con niños de su misma edad, puesto que éstos son quienes tienen mejores habilidades comunicativas y la capacidad para "guiar" al niño en la conversación. Durante sus años de adolescencia, algunos de ellos aprenden a usar las habilidades en las que son mejores (vocabulario y memoria) para compensar sus limitaciones. Cabe señalar que estas y algunas otras particularidades comunicativas y sociales que son parte del TEA en el Síndrome de Asperger no se encuentran presentes en todos los individuos.

El DSM-V (2013) también menciona algunas características funcionales que pueden aparecer en individuos con TEA. Establece que las dificultades comunicativas y sociales en niños con TEA pueden alterar su aprendizaje, especialmente en las interacciones sociales y en el ambiente con compañeros (DSM-V, 2013).

Entonces, ¿cuáles son las consideraciones para tomarse en cuenta cuando un alumno con TEA se enfrenta a aprender una segunda lengua?, ¿deberían adaptarse o combinarse con las características generales y compartidas de las personas con TEA en los salones de clase? De acuerdo con Wire (2005), si estas características no se abordan con sensibilidad, pueden provocar estrés y dificultades en potencia cuando se comience a dar una clase de idiomas (Wire, 2005). Estas condiciones de aprendizaje y uso pueden producir una variación e influir la adquisición y habilidad para procesar el conocimiento del aprendiz hacia modelos de procesamiento psicolingüístico (Ellis, 1994).

Por lo que respecta al desarrollo del lenguaje y para los propósitos de nuestro estudio, mencionamos que los individuos con SA generalmente presentan buenas habilidades de lenguaje desde temprana edad. Sin embargo, las consideraciones cognitivas y lingüísticas de adquisición de una segunda lengua expuestas por Ellis (1994) se enfocan más en la metacognición de los alumnos, lo cual representa un punto de vista contrario al análisis de la cognición de los individuos dentro del espectro autista. Asimismo, recordemos que hay evidencia reciente que sugiere que las alteraciones que poseen los niños con SA se dan principalmente en su interacción social (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Foudon et al., 2008; Frith & Happé, 1994; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; Leekam, Libby, Wing, Gould, & Gillberg, 2000; Saalasti et al., 2008; Wire, 2005; Woodbury-Smith & Volkmar, 2009; World Health Organization, 1992 en Práinsson 2012). La licenciada en Psicopedagogía por la Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, Gabriela Cruz Nevárez, quien ha trabajado con niños diagnosticados con SA, menciona: "A mí si se me hace muy difícil que aprendan una segunda lengua, porque, como tú sabes, no a todos los niños les interesa; es muy raro un niño con ese síndrome que sea sociable¨ (Cruz, G., comunicación personal, septiembre 16, 2013). Claro está que las diferencias en su comportamiento social no pueden sólo atribuirse a una falta de interés de su parte (Quill, 1995). De acuerdo con esta evidencia, estaría claro que el aprendizaje de otro idioma va desde difícil a casi imposible para un individuo con SA y otra forma de Autismo de Alto Funcionamiento.

Por otra parte, podríamos reconsiderar un aspecto característico de la mayoría de los individuos con TEA: la obsesión o interés por un tema en particular (Wire, 2005), en donde son "expertos en el área" (Cruz, G., comunicación personal, septiembre 16 2013). También debemos considerar la actitud de los alumnos, no sólo respecto de los individuos neurotípicos, sino de aquellos con un TEA, hacia la lengua de aprendizaje, así como hacia sus hablantes nativos, su cultura, la percepción social que se tiene de esa lengua y sus usos particulares (Ellis, 1994). A pesar de que la mayoría de los individuos con SA comparten patrones de comportamiento, cada uno tiene rasgos y características únicas y personales (Caballero et al., 2006). Si consideramos estas cuestiones, es posible que haya niños y adolescentes con SA o Autismo de Alto Funcionamiento interesados en aprender una segunda lengua sin importar sus dificultades y/o sus limitaciones, y que tengan éxito en la adquisición del nuevo idioma.

Ahora, si es posible que una persona con TEA aprenda otra lengua, planteamos la pregunta real y el objetivo de nuestro estudio: ¿un estudiante con un TEA, específicamente, con Síndrome de Asperger, puede aprender inglés en un salón de clase “promedio” en México?, ¿cómo puede enseñarse a estos estudiantes de una manera efectiva en una clase de inglés donde no hay adecuaciones ni medidas de inclusión particulares, prestando la misma atención al resto de los estudiantes y viceversa? Este es uno de los aspectos más importantes a tratar en este trabajo, ya que no nos enfocamos en los ambientes naturales de aprendizaje, sino los llamados “ambientes educativos” (Ellis, 1994), en los cuales ocurren el aprendizaje formal y la atención consciente de formas lingüísticas. Ambos ambientes son muy diferentes en su naturaleza, ya que en los “naturales” el aprendizaje ocurre de manera inconsciente. Por tanto, el enfoque de esta investigación es observar y analizar el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma (extranjero) en estudiantes con un TEA en un ambiente educativo formal.

Planteadas nuestras preguntas sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua en estudiantes con SA en un salón de clases y con cierto nivel de conocimiento de la presencia de estos estudiantes en muchas escuelas de México, enfocamos nuestro estudio en individuos diagnosticados con SA en escuelas del estado de Chihuahua.

En general, los estudiantes con SA forman parte de escuelas regulares de acuerdo con Liliana Quezada, quien estuvo a cargo del área de Trastorno del Espectro Autista y otros Trastornos Generalizados del Desarrollo durante el año 2013 en el Departamento de Educación Especial en Chihuahua. Los estudiantes diagnosticados con SA son apoyados por la Unidad de Servicio de Apoyo a la Educación Regular (USAER), que es la entidad que proporciona los elementos para apoyarlos, capacitan a los maestros y aplican metodologías para tratar a los alumnos con equidad e inclusión. Otros docentes y especialistas que contribuyen con Educación Especial del Estado también tienen conocimientos al respecto. Asimismo, muchos docentes de escuelas regulares pueden detectar esas características, mas no diagnosticarlas (Quezada, L., comunicación personal, septiembre 24, 2013).

El hecho de que los docentes sepan acerca de la relación enseñanza-aprendizaje de un segundo idioma en un salón de clase les permite elaborar métodos de enseñanza con base en lo que pueden esperar de un grupo (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Sin embargo, para poder hacer un cambio en el temario, debe haber una propuesta de acuerdo con las necesidades del alumno, para que los encargados de educación especial puedan determinar si es un estudiante con alguna discapacidad o uno con habilidades sobresalientes (Quezada, L., comunicación personal, septiembre 24 2013).

Entonces, ¿existe apoyo para los estudiantes con TEA o SA en escuelas regulares? La respuesta es: sólo para unos cuantos. De acuerdo con la Lic. Gabriela Cruz, solo aquellos niños cuyas familias tengan los recursos económicos tienen la oportunidad de recibir terapia de lenguaje e ir con psicólogos y médicos. A raíz de esto, se desarrollan mejor que un niño que únicamente fue diagnosticado y, sin embargo, nadie hace algo para realmente incluirlo (Cruz, G., comunicación personal, septiembre 16, 2013).

Con base en lo encontrado en la literatura y en entrevistas con profesiones educativos, determinamos los aspectos importantes a incluir en nuestra investigación. Así, podemos observar si, a pesar las características particulares de los estudiantes con Síndrome de Asperger, estos aún pueden aprender un segundo idioma dentro de un salón de clase regular o promedio.

Metodología

Durante la segunda mitad del año 2013 comenzamos una investigación para una tesis de licenciatura, que involucró un estudio de caso con tres individuos diagnosticados con Trastorno del Espectro Autista, Síndrome de Asperger, para saber si podían aprender una lengua extranjera (inglés) en aulas escolares comunes en escuelas de las ciudades de Chihuahua y Delicias, en el estado de Chihuahua, México. Nuestros métodos de evaluación del desempeño y desarrollo de los participantes dentro del salón de clase de inglés fueron los siguientes: un cuestionario y una entrevista acerca de la clase de inglés a cada uno de los participantes, donde expresaron su opinión y postura hacia el idioma inglés, además de lo que les gustaba y lo que no les gustaba al trabajar. Además, realizamos entrevistas a los profesores de inglés de cada individuo sobre el comportamiento y el desempeño de los participantes. Asimismo, hicimos una observación a cada participante durante sus clases de inglés para triangular los resultados con las entrevistas y cuestionarios realizados previamente. Subsecuentemente, durante la segunda mitad del año 2014, aplicamos un Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia a los tres participantes luego de un año lectivo llevando la clase de inglés. De esta manera, obtuvimos datos que nos permitieron observar una gama variada de resultados que nos ayudaron a alcanzar nuestro objetivo principal de investigación.

Para describir el desarrollo de nuestra metodología, comenzamos con los aspectos sociales y educativos de los participantes, para luego pasar a la descripción de nuestras dos fases de recolección de datos. Con base en el orden de los métodos de recolección, mostraremos nuestros resultados.

Participantes

Los participantes principales de este estudio realizado durante los años 2013 y 2014 fueron tres individuos varones, con edades entre los 8 y los 17 años, diagnosticados con TEA por médicos neurólogos certificados. Todos estudiaban en escuelas y grados escolares distintos en el estado de Chihuahua, México, en las ciudades Delicias y en la capital, Chihuahua. Todos los estudiantes llevaban la materia de inglés como lengua extranjera de forma obligatoria y tomaban la clase de tres a cuatro veces por semana. La información detallada de cada uno de los estudiantes con TEA se lista a continuación:

a. Participante 1:

Adolescente con TEA, diagnosticado y con seguimiento médico en la ciudad de Delicias, Chihuahua. Al inicio de su participación en octubre de 2013, el individuo contaba con 16 años, estudiaba el primer año de preparatoria en Delicias, Chih. y estaba tomando clases de inglés tres veces por semana. En la última parte del proceso de recolección de datos, en octubre de 2014, el individuo tenía 17 años, estudiaba el segundo año de preparatoria en Delicias, Chih. y tomaba clases de inglés cuatro veces por semana. Cabe destacar que su capacitación y área especializante durante los dos últimos años de educación preparatoria era en el área de inglés. Durante toda la investigación, se encontraba bajo medicación por su comorbilidad con Trastorno por Déficit de Atención con Hiperactividad (TDAH).

b. Participante 2:

Adolescente con TEA diagnosticado recientemente y con seguimiento médico al inicio de su participación en octubre de 2013. En ese entonces, el participante tenía 14 años, estudiaba el segundo año de secundaria en la Colonia Industrial, Delicias, Chihuahua, y tomaba clases de inglés tres veces por semana. En la segunda fase de recolección de datos, en octubre de 2014, el participante contaba con 15 años, estudiaba el tercer año de secundaria en la Colonia Industrial, Delicias, Chih. y seguía tomando clases de inglés tres veces por semana.

c. Participante 3:

Infante con TEA diagnosticado y con seguimiento médico en la ciudad capital de Chihuahua, Chihuahua. Al inicio de su participación en octubre del año 2013, el participante tenía 8 años, estudiaba el tercer grado de educación primaria en Cd. Chihuahua, Chih. y tomaba clases de inglés tres veces por semana. Asimismo, asistía a terapia de lenguaje y conducta. En la última parte de recolección de datos, en octubre de 2014, el participante contaba con 9 años, cursaba el cuarto año de primaria en Cd. Chihuahua, Chih. y seguía tomando clases de inglés tres veces por semana.

Recolección de datos

Nuestro procedimiento de recolección de datos se llevó a cabo en dos fases. La fase inicial, de la cual se desprenden la mayoría de los datos recolectados, se llevó a cabo en el 2013. La segunda y última fase, donde obtuvimos resultados sobre el aprendizaje y la competencia del inglés en los estudiantes luego de un año de clase, se realizó en el año 2014. Gracias a ello, obtuvimos un rango más amplio de los datos para determinar si el estudiante con Síndrome de Asperger puede aprender, o no, un segundo idioma dentro de un salón de clase regular.

a. Fase inicial:

Durante los meses de octubre y noviembre del año 2013, los tres participantes fueron entrevistados acerca de sus clases de inglés, su opinión sobre tales, sus preferencias, su modo de trabajo y su competencia del idioma inglés. Las entrevistas se hicieron en sus hogares, donde también contestaron un breve cuestionario sobre sus clases y sobre vocabulario básico del inglés: colores, días de la semana y meses del año.

Asimismo, durante estos meses del año, realizamos observaciones sobre el desarrollo y el comportamiento de los tres participantes en su clase de inglés con sus maestros y compañeros durante el ciclo escolar. Estas observaciones no se grabaron; sin embargo, tomamos notas acerca de ellas. Todas las observaciones se hicieron bajo consentimiento del profesor de inglés, los directivos escolares y los padres de cada participante. Asimismo, tuvimos entrevistas con los profesores de inglés de los tres participantes después de la clase de inglés que observamos, quienes platicaron sobre el comportamiento y el desarrollo de sus alumnos con TEA en clase, su conocimiento y competencia del inglés, así como su interés sobre la materia y la lengua.

b. Fase final:

La segunda fase de recolección ocurrió durante el mes de octubre del año 2014, cuando administramos un Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia adaptado de una prueba básica de inglés de *Macmillan Publishers Limited* del 2004. Este procedimiento se hizo para analizar el conocimiento del inglés y su competencia después de un año de la primera recolección de datos de los participantes, para determinar su nivel de aprendizaje y competencia de la lengua inglesa. En la Tabla 1, describimos los criterios de evaluación aplicados al examen de competencia, basados en un sistema de evaluación por reactivos correctos e incorrectos, así como del comportamiento del participante/alumno.

BUENO	Tiene de doce a ningún error en su habilidad auditiva, su gramática y los reactivos del examen. No copia y hace pocas preguntas al aplicador del examen.
PROMEDIO	Tiene de doce a dieciséis errores en su habilidad auditiva, su gramática y los reactivos del examen. Copia moderadamente y hace algunas preguntas al aplicador del examen.
MALO	Tiene de veintiséis a treinta y ocho errores en su habilidad auditiva, su gramática y los reactivos del examen. Copia y hace muchas preguntas al aplicador del examen.

Tabla 1. Criterios para evaluar y valorar los resultados del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia adaptado de un examen de Macmillan Publishers Limited (2004).

Para comparar y contrastar los resultados tanto entre los tres participantes y entre estos y sus compañeros, el examen se aplicó dentro de sus salones de clase en compañía de sus maestros. Con este instrumento, obtuvimos resultados sobre el aprendizaje y la competencia de los tres participantes en calidad de individuos con TEA, y con relación al aprendizaje y competencia de sus compañeros neuro-típicos.

Como observamos, la secuencia de nuestra recolección de datos comienza con nuestros participantes, sus características diagnósticas y educativas. Además, describimos sus características sociales en relación con el ambiente escolar mediante entrevistas y cuestionarios. Para complementar, obtuvimos datos generales sobre el conocimiento y la competencia lingüística del inglés de los participantes con TEA y sus contrapartes neurotípicas, sus compañeros de clase. Los resultados que mostramos a continuación siguen este mismo orden, para al final responder nuestra pregunta principal de investigación.

Resultados

Presentamos nuestros resultados de acuerdo con la fase inicial y final de nuestra recolección de datos. En primer lugar, hablamos sobre los resultados reflejados por los tres individuos TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, después del análisis de los cuestionarios y las entrevistas a los participantes, las observaciones de clase y las entrevistas con sus profesores de inglés. En segundo lugar, describimos los resultados de la implementación del examen diagnóstico de competencia del inglés a los participantes y a sus compañeros de clase.

Resultados de la fase inicial

Cuestionarios y entrevistas a los participantes con TEA

Los cuestionarios y entrevistas reflejan ciertos aspectos de las características de los individuos con TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, así como cierta competencia del inglés. En los cuestionarios, los participantes dieron respuestas cortas y breves sobre lo que les agrada y desagrada de la clase de inglés en sus escuelas. Solamente mencionaron lo que consideraron eran las respuestas más relevantes, lo que hace recordar el hecho mencionado por Quill (1995) acerca de que su lenguaje es utilizado para propósitos esenciales, no tanto para interactuar. Las respuestas de los participantes 1 y 3 a las preguntas hechas en inglés mostraron que los individuos tenían un conocimiento básico de la gramática de la lengua inglesa y que pueden responder a preguntas utilizando léxico básico en inglés. Aunque ambos participantes están estudiando en niveles educativos diferentes, su conocimiento del inglés es prácticamente el mismo. Un caso distinto fue el del participante 2, quien presenta muy poco conocimiento del inglés y tiene problemas para comunicarse con otras personas.

Por su parte, las entrevistas con los participantes muestran que, en general, los estudiantes poseen limitaciones para socializar. Además, algunos de ellos prestan mucha atención y saben bastante sobre ciertos temas, personas y sucesos, lo cual también ha sido mencionado en la página de internet *Intense World Syndrome*. En resumen, los tres individuos tenían conocimiento y cierta competencia del inglés gracias a sus clases en la escuela, aun con aquellas características que podrían considerarse limitantes en el momento del aprendizaje en el ambiente escolar.

Entrevistas a los profesores de inglés de los participantes con TEA

De acuerdo con los maestros de inglés de los tres participantes, a los individuos les va bien durante sus clases y tienen buena competencia del idioma. Por otra parte, con base en otras de sus respuestas, se pueden percibir muchas de las características de los criterios generales establecidos para el diagnóstico del Síndrome de Asperger por el DSM-V (2013), tales como la dificultad con las relaciones sociales (algunos de ellos se llevan mejor con el docente que con los compañeros, prefieren trabajar solos y se enojan cuando otros están hablando o no trabajan como ellos quieren que trabajen), habilidades deficientes de lenguaje y comunicación (algunos no piden ayuda ni participan a menos que el maestro les pregunte o les pida que lo hagan) e intereses restringidos (como dibujar todo el tiempo o el interés por el mismo idioma inglés).

Por otra parte, todos los docentes estaban de acuerdo con un hecho: que algunas de las habilidades de los individuos iban más allá del promedio, como ha sido observado por Markram et al. (2007), y que pueden distraerse fácilmente cuando no comprenden algo, no están interesados en la actividad o en lo que el maestro tiene que decir, justo como lo menciona la Asociación Asperger

Argentina. En pocas palabras, las características compartidas por los participantes como individuos con TEA los convierten en alumnos y compañeros particulares, lo que no significa que impiden la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de sus compañeros o los propios.

Observaciones en clase a los participantes con TEA

Las observaciones hechas en los salones de clase de los participantes durante su clase de inglés reflejaron de cierta forma las descripciones de comportamiento y desarrollo de los individuos hechas por los docentes de inglés, además de sus gustos, aversiones y su postura hacia la clase y el idioma inglés. A pesar de que cada estudiante se encontraba en un ambiente socio-escolar y un grado educativo distinto, todos se mantuvieron en calma durante la clase e incluso convivían con algunos compañeros. Durante las actividades de clase, todos necesitaron la atención particular del maestro o más explicaciones. Cabe mencionar también, que la mayoría de ellos se distrajo durante parte de las explicaciones del maestro, llevándolos ya sea a copiar las respuestas a sus compañeros, o necesitar, a pedir ayuda de estos o pedir ayuda a sus docentes.

Durante nuestras observaciones, no distinguimos ninguno de los criterios de diagnóstico para el Síndrome de Asperger. De hecho, su desenvolvimiento mostró que poseen habilidades cognitivas diferentes en lugar de habilidades cognitivas deficientes (Avitia et al., 2013). Puede que esta sea la razón para que hayan logrado adquirir el nivel de inglés que poseen dentro de la clase, con las actividades, juegos e instrucciones que han seguido a pesar de sus características.

Resultados de la fase final

Los siguientes resultados muestran la comparación y contraste de resultados entre los individuos con Síndrome de Asperger y sus respectivos compañeros de la clase de inglés después de la aplicación del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia adaptado de un examen de Macmillan Publishers Limited del año 2004. Este examen se aplicó luego de que los participantes llevaran un año lectivo tomando clases de inglés regularmente, y comparar sus habilidades y competencia lingüística entre ellos y entre sus compañeros.

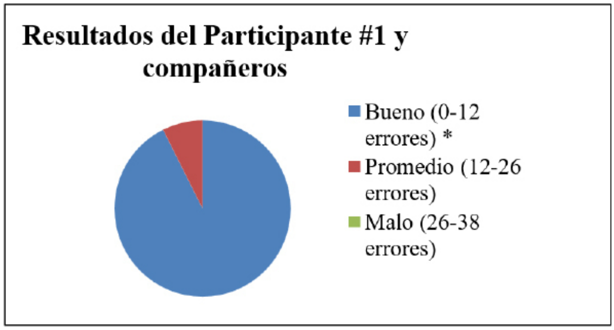
Comparación y contraste de los resultados de los participantes con TEA y sus compañeros de clase

La comparación y el contraste del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia aplicado a los tres participantes con Síndrome de Asperger mostró que poseen un nivel de competencia básico del inglés, incluso con un diagnóstico de individuos con TEA. En comparación con sus compañeros, no hubo diferencias particulares que los caracterizaran como individuos con algún trastorno del neuro-desarrollo o con la incapacidad de aprender una segunda lengua. A continuación, presentamos los resultados de cada participante en contraste con los resultados de sus compañeros de clase, así como algunas anotaciones sobre su comportamiento durante el desarrollo del examen.

Participante #1

Los resultados de la clase de inglés a la que asiste el Participante #1 muestran que la mayoría de los alumnos posee un nivel "bueno" de competencia básica del idioma inglés. Sin embargo, muchos de ellos no leyeron las instrucciones y tuvieron respuestas incorrectas o errores. A pesar de estas situaciones, su conocimiento del idioma es adecuado para el nivel de la clase de inglés y su edad.

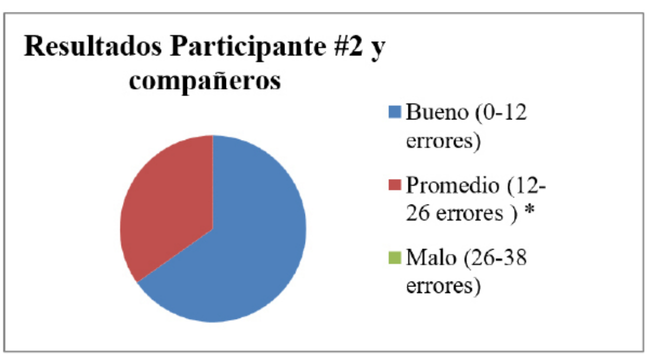
Por su parte, el participante #1 quedó dentro del grupo de estudiantes con una evaluación "Buena», como lo muestra la gráfica 1. Tuvo el mismo tipo de complicaciones en las mismas secciones que muchos de sus compañeros, como en sus habilidades de lectura y seguimiento de instrucciones. Al igual que los demás estudiantes, también solicitó ayuda al aplicador del examen para comprender instrucciones y palabras. Fue el último en terminar el examen y tuvo que irse a la oficina del maestro para concentrarse. Sin embargo, los resultados del participante con Síndrome de Asperger indican que tiene un conocimiento básico adecuado del idioma inglés y, como pasó con los demás estudiantes de la clase de inglés; sus errores y dificultades no afectaron considerablemente sus resultados en el examen.



Gráfica 1. Aplicación del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia al participante #1 y sus compañeros.

Participante #2

En general, los resultados de la clase del participante #2 mostraron una competencia básica del inglés en todo el grupo. Como observamos en la gráfica 2.1, aunque la mayoría de los alumnos tuvieron una calificación "buena" en su examen, una tercera parte del grupo lo constituyó el "promedio", entre los cuales se encuentra el participante #2. Durante el desarrollo del examen, el participante tuvo problemas de comprensión lectora y confusión en la sección de preguntas y respuestas, así como el seguimiento de instrucciones. Sin embargo, tales situaciones no afectaron considerablemente los resultados del examen.



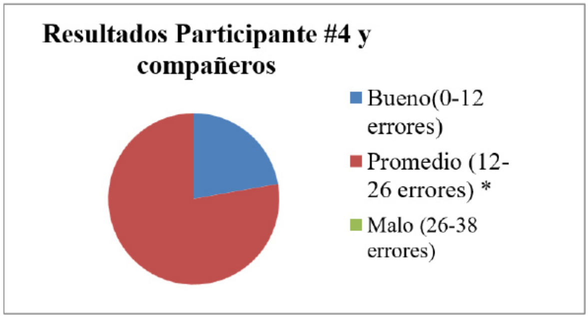
Gráfica 2. Aplicación del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia al participante #2 y sus compañeros.

Por su parte, los resultados y problemas durante la realización del examen que presentó el estudiante con Síndrome de Asperger no fueron muy diferentes al resto de la clase. Por otra parte, presentó una mejor comprensión lectora en la última sección y le fue mejor con sus respuestas que al resto de los estudiantes.

Participante #3

Como podemos observar, tres cuartas partes de los alumnos del grupo del participante #3 obtuvieron resultados "promedio" en su examen de conocimientos y competencia del inglés. Al igual que en los grupos de los participantes #1 y #2, el grupo del participante #3 tuvo las mismas complicaciones en el examen, entre las cuales se incluyen: comprensión lectora en las preguntas y respuestas, la mayoría no leyó con cuidado las instrucciones y tampoco les fue bien en la sección de lectura. Algunos estudiantes contestaron las preguntas de acuerdo con lo que escucharon en vez de leer lo que estaban escuchando. Asimismo, todos fueron con el aplicador para preguntar sobre las instrucciones, el vocabulario o solamente para platicar. A pesar de tales problemáticas, su conocimiento básico del idioma inglés es adecuado para su edad y grado de estudios.

Respecto al participante #3, hizo menos preguntas que sus compañeros sobre las instrucciones y el significado del vocabulario durante el desarrollo del examen. Aunque tuvo las mismas complicaciones que sus compañeros, contestó mejor al examen e incluso dijo algunas respuestas en voz alta cuando otros estudiantes formularon alguna pregunta. En particular, el participante se mantuvo solo contestando la prueba hasta que terminó mientras otros hablaban y jugaban. Como observamos en la gráfica 3.1, los resultados del participante #3 se encuentran dentro del "promedio" de la clase, el cual fue mayoría. Tales resultados nos demuestran, al igual que en las entrevistas y observaciones, que el participante #3 poseía un conocimiento básico y competencia del idioma inglés.



Gráfica 3. Aplicación del Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia al participante #2 y sus compañeros.

Comparación y contraste entre los resultados de los tres participantes con TEA Síndrome de Asperger

Respecto a la comparación y el contraste de los resultados y el comportamiento de los tres participantes con TEA durante la realización del examen, obtuvimos información que respalda nuestros hallazgos y datos sobre cada uno de ellos, más allá de su diagnóstico de individuos con TEA, como observamos en la tabla 2.

	Participante #1	Participante #2	Participante #4
COMPARACIÓN & CONTRASTE	-Dentro de la categoría de resultados "bueno". -Hacía preguntas al aplicador sobre las preguntas del examen y su vocabulario hablando en inglés. -Trabajó solo y se le concedió más tiempo para terminar el examen.	-Dentro de la categoría de resultados "promedio". -No hizo ninguna pregunta acerca de las instrucciones del examen o el vocabulario, pero dejó muchas secciones de éste sin contestar.	-Dentro de la categoría de resultados "promedio". -Hacía preguntas al aplicador sobre las preguntas del examen y su vocabulario hablando en inglés.

Tabla 2. Comparación de los resultados y desarrollo de los participantes con Síndrome de Asperger en el Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia.

Como pudimos observar tanto en los resultados y hallazgos grupales como individuales, el Examen Diagnóstico de Competencia aplicado a los participantes con TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, mostró que los tres poseen un conocimiento y competencia básicos del inglés como lengua extranjera. El único aspecto variable entre los participantes, como lo ha mencionado Ellis (1994), fue su motivación e interés, en comparación con el resto de sus respectivos compañeros de la clase de inglés. Durante el desarrollo de la prueba y en sus resultados, no se reflejó en su comportamiento ninguno de los aspectos generales y características específicas del TEA: alteración social en su interacción comunicativa, comportamientos repetitivos ni intereses restringidos (DSM-V, 2013). Aunado a los datos y hallazgos sobre el comportamiento en clase y la relación con sus compañeros, nuestros resultados demuestran los tres participantes podían desenvolverse en clase y aprender una lengua extranjera al igual que la mayoría de sus compañeros de clase neurotípicos.

Conclusiones

Luego de la triangulación de nuestros resultados recabados en dos fases, los cuales consistieron en entrevistas y cuestionarios a los participantes y sus profesores de inglés, observaciones de clase con cada participante y un examen de conocimientos básicos del inglés aplicados a todos los participantes y sus compañeros de clase, concluimos lo siguiente:

1. Aunque los participantes muestran los criterios generales de diagnóstico para individuos con TEA establecidos por el DSM-V (2013), tales características no les imposibilitan desarrollarse dentro de un salón de clase “promedio” con compañeros neurotípicos y aprender una segunda lengua de forma escolarizada. Aunque la presencia de tales características hacía que el aprendizaje y el desarrollo en el salón de clases fueran más difíciles, en ocasiones colocaban a los participantes como alumnos sobresalientes en comparación con otros estudiantes. Como se mencionó en la página en línea “The Third Glance”, en ocasiones las formas tradicionales de enseñanza no funcionan del todo con los alumnos con TEA, lo que no implica que sea imposible.

2. Todos los participantes habían adquirido su conocimiento y desarrollado su competencia del inglés en ritmos y tiempos diferentes por diversas razones. En este caso, debemos tomar en consideración la manera de enseñar y acercarse a los alumnos de los docentes, el nivel educativo de cada participante, su edad, su nivel socioeconómico, así como el seguimiento de su diagnóstico y condición. Como hemos mencionado, todo es cuestión de variables. Recordemos que, como menciona Ellis (1994, p. 22), además del grado de su neuro-desarrollo: "los estudiantes de idiomas son particularmente proclives a la variabilidad". Asimismo, Caballero (2006) menciona que todos los individuos con TEA son diferentes en cuanto a sus características, comportamiento, desarrollo y desempeño.

Gracias a nuestros resultados y conclusiones anteriores, pudimos alcanzar nuestro objetivo principal de investigación, el cual buscaba determinar si las personas con Trastorno del Espectro Autista, Síndrome de Asperger, eran capaces de aprender una lengua extranjera dentro de un salón de clase típico, con otros estudiantes que no presentaran el mismo diagnóstico que ellos.

Consideramos pertinente mencionar que, en el tiempo en que realizamos este trabajo de investigación, incluimos algunas recomendaciones y propuestas, las cuales añadimos de nuevo por su continua importancia:

a. son necesarios más trabajos relacionados con las habilidades comunicativas, lingüísticas, sociales y de aprendizaje de los individuos con TEA, con más variables en cuanto al número de participantes, sus grados escolares, el estado y seguimientos de su diagnóstico, así como su desempeño e intereses fuera de clase. Entre algunos trabajos recientes al respecto, encontramos la investigación de la Mtra. Andrea Alvarado, de la Universidad de Guadalajara, sobre conversaciones entre individuos con TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, donde analiza las características discursivas de tales conversaciones entre pares (Alvarado, 2022). El continuo de características que posee el TEA, desde limitantes hasta sobresalientes, nos provee de un rango de posibilidades respecto a estas habilidades; por ello, es interesante e importante conocer de manera variada cómo se desarrollan e interactúan con el medio individuos con TEA con diferentes grados de "intensidad".

b. Los investigadores, padres de familia e instituciones relacionadas con trastornos del neurodesarrollo o con individuos con algún TEA debemos continuar con el aprendizaje, la difusión y la concientización sobre el Trastorno del Espectro Autista, así como advertir que cada individuo posee limitaciones y habilidades que los hace diferentes entre ellos, como se ha visto en los análisis y resultados del presente texto. La importancia de promover las características generales e individuales de las personas con TEA nos ayuda a comprender de forma amplia cómo relacionarnos con ellos como personas, más allá de las características de un trastorno del neurodesarrollo.
c. Los aspectos relacionados con los patrones específicos de comportamiento e intereses restringidos de los individuos con TEA también aplican como variables que pueden actuar como barreras o incentivos en el aprendizaje y la comunicación del estudiante con TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, mientras aprende una segunda lengua o una lengua extranjera en un salón de clase. Es importante que los docentes tomemos en cuenta estas características particulares en el estudiante con TEA durante la clase y fuera de ella o preguntar a los padres de familia al respecto para tener un mejor acercamiento a las necesidades y habilidades del individuo.
d. Por último, en cuanto a las habilidades de socialización de los alumnos con TEA, consideramos importante recalcar algunos puntos, basados en nuestras observaciones de clases y entrevistas. Primero, queda claro que prefieren trabajar solos o se les deja solos por varias razones. Como observamos en nuestros hallazgos, algunos de ellos pueden no presentar problemas para pedir ayuda a sus compañeros o a su profesor para comprender o terminar una actividad. Segundo, aunque los estudiantes con TEA puedan gustar de los juegos y actividades estructuradas, la mayoría no se siente cómodo en competencias o con las ideas de "ganar" y "perder". Como se ha explicado con anteriori-

dad, cada estudiante es único y diferente y esta situación aplica para las personas que posean, o no, un TEA. Con base en estos aspectos, los maestros podemos tratar de desarrollar o encontrar actividades que puedan beneficiar al aprendizaje y el desarrollo de todos los individuos de una clase de lengua extranjera, incluyendo a aquellos con TEA, Síndrome de Asperger, en el caso de estar diagnosticados.

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Gender Visibility in an ELT Textbook used at a Public University in the State of Michoacán

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Margarita Ramos Godínez

Abstract

In this article we analyze the textbook *American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate* student's book used at the largest public University in the state of Michoacán in order to find out whether there is balance of genders throughout the text. We analyze it in terms of Critical Pedagogics, Gender visibility and Gender Discourse through content analysis methodology using quantitative and qualitative data. Gender Visibility was determined by the number and types of characters by gender, the number and types of occupations by gender, the number and analysis of photographs by gender and the number of gendered pronouns while Gender Discourse was analyzed through characters that speak more. It is relevant to mention that this time around, our categories were based in terms of binary genders, but it would be worth researching the visibility of non-binary ones. Boyle (2019) mentions that "[…] gender opposed to sex is socially constructed. Sex is biological and determined by physical characteristics that define males and females. On the other hand, social cultural, political, economic, and historical aspects play an important role on gender." In general, most of the categories are balanced; however, the category of occupations was imbalanced and such findings keep perpetuating harmful stereotypes of genders that dictate that males cannot be responsible of home chores and women cannot

have positions of power and business, per se. There were more results in regard to images that empower men much more than women.

Key words: *Critical Pedagogics, Gender visibility, Gender Discourse, Textbooks.*

Introduction

When choosing a textbook for teaching any discipline, it is important to consider the social values depicted within. They not only provide secondary information that may shape the way a society thinks, but they also play an important role in dictating the way genders are supposed to behave (Gershuny,1977, p. 150-152). We would suggest that to choose an ELT textbook, we must consider not only the linguistic components such as phonology, morphology, syntax semantics and pragmatics and the inclusion of the four skills' practice amongst other factors established by ELT book editors, but we also need to carefully evaluate the hidden elements such as the human and social values and the way women and men by gender are portrayed in a textbook. Do the textbook topics agree with the values we want to transmit as teachers? Is the textbook portraying people equally? Are there stereotypes being reproduced throughout the textbook? These are some questions we would consider before deciding on what textbook to use with our students.

Reproducing gender stereotypes, the lack of women's visibility, and reproducing discourse that portraits inequality of genders may shape students' way of thinking and behaving especially if they are not critical enough since there are discourses that may not be reflected and some others that are immediately incorporated. Even worse, this ideology may be transmitted to others in society since these are models that have the tendency to be automatically reproduced in the future. In accordance with this, (Pauwels, 1988 in Lee 2014, pp. 39-53) states that "Apart from linguistic sexism, omission of females and gender stereotyping there are other manifestations of gender inequality found in educational materials". Gender stereotypes are usually considered to be harmful and pernicious since regular exposure to them may cause them to take them as models for their own behavior. Even some of the most accessible texts on gendered linguistic behavior consider women's language to be shaped by qualities such as modesty, deference, politeness, empathy, supportiveness and cooperation (Lakoff, 1975 in Cameron, 2003, p. 450).

Eliminating gender disparities has become of importance to international education. An example of this has been UNESCO, that has considered achieving gender equality in education by 2015 as one of its main goals. This institution also identifies and reports stereotypes that persist in learning materials as an issue that negatively affects gender equality. Regarding this matter Blumberg (2007, p. 4) states that Gender bias in textbooks: 1) it's one of the best hidden rocks in the road to gender equality, 2) it's widespread geographically, 3) it has a common pattern, that is, females tend to be underrepresented, both females and males are depicted under gender stereotypes ways that girls' and boys' visions of who they are and what they can become are constrained.

These are some of the reasons why it is important to carry out research that focuses on analyzing educational textbooks and the ELT area is not an exception. In the present study we will focus on analyzing the textbook used at a Public University in the State of Michoacán "American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate". This textbook is used by around 3,200 students and 200 teachers, population that increases geometrically as time passes by and which ideology might be influenced by the portrayed ideas in it. The present research will hopefully provide an insight of the textbook and will indicate if there is a gender balance or if there is gender imbalance in the shape of stereotypes or underrepresentation of women.

In that sense, the present study seeks to analyze the ELT textbook used at the Public University in Michoacán "American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate" in order to find out if there is a balance in the representation of Genders throughout the textbook, regarding Visibility of female and male characters whenever they refer to occupations. Methodologically speaking, we analyze it using content analysis methodology which resources to qualitative data that can be transformed into quantitative data when we count instances of words, phrases images and so on and so forth.

Literature Review

In this section, we first approach to how Critical Pedagogics is involved in this study, we move towards gender, sexism and stereotypes, Gender equality UNESCO's goals and Gender Visibilty which are important ideological theories, policies and terms in this research.

Critical pedagogy

Firstly, we need to talk about what critical pedagogy (CP) is since it has been in charge of analyzing asymmetrical relations in education. In general, Critical Pedagogy "is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structure of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation state" (McLaren, 1998, p. 45).

This approach is based on Paulo Freire's ideas of critical theory which sympathizes with de idea of a fair society in which people have political, economic, and cultural control of their lives. Some of the main concerns of critical pedagogy are: 1) criticizing the schooling in capitalist societies, 2) awareness raising, 3) rejection of violation and discrimination against people, amongst others (Gor, 2005 mentioned by Aliakbari and Faraji, 2011, p. 77)

Under the view of Critical Pedagogy students should have their own autonomy, and emancipation. Indeed, they should act in a way that enables them to transform their societies. Thus, students have an active role on their own education and are led to critical consciousness through problem posing. The teacher listens to students, selects meaningful situations and asks inductive questions about the situation.

Contrary to traditional education where the teacher is the source of knowledge, s/he chooses the content and is an authority figure in CP, teachers lead students to develop their own knowledge. Teacher under this approach should empower students by raising awareness of equality in society, learn from students and appreciate their viewpoints, help students learn from each other, help them understand how to question authority and power in the classroom, etc.

In terms of curriculum and materials in CP, they are based on the idea that there is no set of curriculum or program because they are developed based on the needs and interests of students. Materials are usually authentic and tend to represent the culture of the students. They are the base of discussion and critical reflection. Texts and topics are suggested by both teachers and students and students choose the topics that are more relevant in their own experience.

As can be noticed, CP is the basis for this study since it is aimed to identify if there is inequality of gender reflected in textbooks. Just as CP aims to identify the systems of oppression through awareness so does this study. We want to analyze the different ways that a textbook can show oppression and inequality towards a sector of society; in this case it is the female gender.

Gender, sexism, and stereotypes

It is as important to define the term gender since the purpose of this study is to find out if there is a gender balance regarding occupations in the ELT textbook used at a public University. In that sense, (Shapiro, 1981 in McElhinny, 2003, p. 22) emphasized that the term "sex" would be used when speaking about biological differences between males and females and "gender" when referring to the social, cultural, psychological constructs that are imposed upon these biological differences.

Consequently, we can say that gender opposed to sex is socially constructed. Sex is biological and determined by physical characteristics that define males and females. On the another hand, social cultural, political, economic, and historical aspects play an important role on gender. (Boyle, 2019: "Gender" paragraph four)

For this piece of research, we will be using the binary category of gender since we want to focus on inequality between males and females. It would be part of other study to analyze the representation of non-binary people.

Some gender norms in society can lead to gender inequality or sexism that can be manifested in different manners. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (n.d.) "Sexism is linked to beliefs around the fundamental nature of women and men and the roles they should play in society. Sexist assumptions about women and men, which manifest themselves as gender stereotypes, can rank one gender as superior to another. Such hierarchical thinking can be conscious and hostile, or it can be unconscious, manifesting itself as unconscious bias".

These manifestations of gender inequality and sexism are present in our daily life consciously and unconsciously, as it was mentioned before. They are historically and culturally rooted and affect women all over the world. Some examples can be seen in the media where we are daily exposed to, but they are also manifested through textbooks. For the purpose of this piece of research, we will be focusing on analyzing if pictures and language present inside an ELT textbook keep perpetuating these ideas.

UNESCO's gender equality goals

Achieving gender equality is one of the main goals of UNESCO, who recognizes gender equality to be one of their priorities through their 2030 agenda. They consider gender equality to be of great importance since globally more girls than boys remain out of school and two thirds out of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills are women. (UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action). This is just one of the examples of how gender inequality is reflected in our contemporary life and how it is of global concern to minimize such attitudes if not to put an end to it.

It is also relevant to mention that in order to achieve equality in Education, important attention has been paid to the role of textbooks. Blumberg (2007, p. 4) mentions that textbooks represent a hidden obstacle on the road to gender equality in education. There has been some qualitative and quantitative research done in Developing Nations about the male biased content in the language used in textbooks concluding that females are usually derogated and victimized in the books. Some other conclusions taken from these studies were that there is an under-representation of females, the use of male words to mean all of humanity is prevalent and traditional gender stereotypes about occupations and activities of males and females is prevalent. There have also been case studies concerning gender bias in Latin American Texts. Countries such as Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica have been doing texts analysis through government support. Some of these countries attempted to start the studies and later they were frustrated due to government changes or conflicts with Catholic authorities.

Gender Representation in ELT Textbooks

Gender Representations can be identified at three different levels in the ELT classroom: the English language, materials such as textbooks and dictionaries, and processes such as learning styles and classroom interaction (Sunderland, 2012, pp. 81-84). For the scope of this research, we will be discussing how gender representations in textbooks can be analyzed. ELT coursebooks sexism analysis has focused on mainly three scopes; the relative invisibility of female characters, stereotypes in gender roles (related to occupations, relationships, actions, and age) and language as a discourse (gender composition of the dialogues, frequency of spoken language according to genders, male firstness, who speaks first in a conversation and functions exemplified by males and females). It is important to mention that the term firstness is when two nouns or pronouns of different gender are mentioned, and the masculine noun always comes first. (Porreca, 1984 in Dominguez, 2003, p. 6). For example, if we mention in one sentence “Mr. and Mrs.” “Him and her” “John and Sue”. The only exception to this old rule is the use of the pair “ladies and gentlemen”. The results of analysis of ELT textbooks have shown that female characters are scarce, usually of lower status, defined in relationship to the opposite sex, relatively inactive, quieter, and being respondents rather than initiators of a conversation (Ether,1980; Porrecca 1984; Talasky,1986; Zografu, 1990; Gupta and Yin, 1990 in Sunderland, 1992, p. 85).

Analysis of textbooks can be done through these three lenses previously mentioned. Next, we will briefly explain what each category is and the way it can be viewed.

Gender Roles

This category refers to those occupational and social roles that are commonly associated with genders. This is a social construct since there is commonly no evidence that certain roles are only performed well by a specific gender. This can be analyzed through categories such as male monopolized social roles, male dominated social roles, female monopolized social roles and female dominated social roles.

These are some examples of how Gender Roles are analyzed in other studies. In the present study the category of Gender roles will be included in Gender Visibility and not as a separate category.

Gender Visibility

As it was mentioned before, Gender Visibility is an important indicator of gender balance in a textbook. It refers to the relative numbers of males and females appearing in textbooks and it’s perhaps the easiest aspect of gender balance to examine (Stockdale, 2006, p. 1). The problem with sexism in EFL materials presented as lack of visibility of women as explained by Sunderland (1994, p. 86), is that it reinforces the idea that women´s accomplishments or existence is not important enough to be included. The omission of the existence of women’s contribution is a clear manifestation of gender inequality that can be examined through the number of appearances of photographs of male and female characters, number of female and male pronouns, number of characters that are female and male and number of occupations done by women and men.

The number of women appearing in textbooks in the form of photographs, pronouns characters and occupations are important, but it is also important the type of photos, characters and occupations. For example, if the photographs are only showing women who are successful because of their beauty or photographs showing successful women working in science. The same with the characters and occupations, if men are shown as the principal character or the one in control or power and women are represented only as followers and respondents, then there is no balance in genders.

It is worth mentioning that there have been previous pieces of research such as the one carried out by Dominguez (2003, pp. 1-19) where she analyzed the number of male and female characters in text and illustrations, firstness of females and males in conversations and the analysis of the occupational roles in texts and illustrations, concluding that there is no gender bias in the book since there is a balance in the male and female characters, the occupations assigned to men and women are non-traditional and the amount of talk is similar during the interactions in conversations.

One more interesting piece of research is the one carried out by Sánchez (2021) at the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla*. The focus was on gender representation through the analysis of three ELT textbooks used in elementary schools in Mexico. In such research, she analyzes gender in terms of visibility in illustrations and photos and the display of male and female occupational roles through visuals. She concluded that there is no balance between genders in relation to frequency, but she found out that both genders appeared the same number of times. Occupational gender stereotypes were also found in the three textbooks.

Methodology

Methodologically speaking, we resourced to content analysis that according to Dörnyei (2007, p. 245) originated from a quantitative analytical method in where texts were analyzed by counting words, phrases, or grammatical structures that fall into categories to be analyzed. However, this content analysis has been moved to a qualitative paradigm. It is important to code the themes by content, then count it and interpret in order to build theory or at least reach to conclusions. As further explained in 3.2. In order to do so, we first formulated our general research question for this study which was:

- Is the visibility of both genders balanced in the target textbook in regards to occupations?

This question will be answered through these specific ones:

- What is the **number** and the **type** of occupations presented in the book by Gender?
- How is the gendered discourse manifested?

It is worth making emphasis on the fact that the mention of occupations will be analyzed through reading and listening exercises included in the textbook.

In order to present this research methodology, we will briefly describe the textbook that is being analyzed. Then, an explanation of what content analysis is and how it will be used to carry out the research will be given. After that, the procedure to analyze the book will be explained in detail. This will be divided into Procedure for Visibility and Procedure for Gender Discourse.

Description of the ELT textbook

"American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate" is part of a textbook series of Mac Millan editorials. It was published in 2018 and it was based on the previous series called "New American Inside Out" (2012). The authors are a female and a male, and the 2018 version was adapted also by a male and a female. The series contain a set of six books: Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate and Advanced levels, but only the Upper-Intermediate book will be analyzed. The textbook was chosen among the series mainly because the previous version contained outdated topics, and it was randomly chosen to represent the rest.

Each book contains 12 units divided into Speaking and Writing activities, Reading and Listening Texts and Grammar Vocabulary and Pronunciation. Each unit focuses on a specific topic that is studied through different types of activities. The Readings and Listening activities are usually monologues, interviews, and conversations. Each Unit contains two to three reading and listening exercises.

In 2019 the book series "American Inside Out Evolution" was chosen to be used by all the English students at the Language Department´s Public University in the State of Michoacán, México. The Language Department teaches English to high school and college students, but it is open for any adult who wants to take lessons. It has offices in eleven other cities in the State and the total number of students taking English lessons are around 3,200. The main reason why the book was chosen to be analyzed was because it is used by the biggest university in the State of Michoacán to teach English to students.

Content Analysis

The present research will be done using Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis. Content Analysis is described as a technique that is useful to obtain data about specific characteristics. It is also described as "A research tool to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data" (University of Columbia, n.d.). It is also defined as "Any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages”. (Holsti,1968 in Columbia University, 2019 “Description” paragraph two) This type of analysis is used to evaluate language to find out whether there is bias or partiality. The data obtained to be analyzed can come from interviews, questionnaires, books, essays, media, etc. In the case of the present study the data will be taken from the ELT textbook previously described.

Content Analysis can be divided into conceptual or relational. For the purpose of this study Conceptual Content Analysis will be used. A concept is chosen for examination and the analysis involves quantifying and counting its presence. The main objective is to identify occurrence of selected terms in the data. In this case the concept of study which is gender representation through the analysis of visibility and gendered discourse. In both areas specific words and images will be counted and then analyzed.

The research questions will be answered with numbers which will be later analyzed and interpreted. First there will be a counting of the characters, occupations, photographs, nouns and pronouns. Afterwards, they will be classified and analyzed in order to come up with a conclusion about visibility of genders in the book. The gendered discourse will also be divided into quantitative and qualitative terms by determining the amount of talk by genders in mixed sex dialogues, determining who initiates a conversation the types of relationships shown in conversations and whether there is equality or inequality in them. Then, an analysis of the outcomes will be made.

Procedure for analyzing Visibility

Gender visibility will be analyzed through content analysis methodology, and it will be done in quantitative and qualitative terms. Visibility will be determined by the number and types of characters by gender, the number, and types of occupations by gender, the number and analysis of photographs by gender and the number of gendered pronouns.

Procedure for Number and types of characters by Gender

In this section, an analysis of the characters that appear through all the reading, listening and conversation exercises in the textbook American Inside Out Evolution Upper Intermediate will be made. First, a code for the type of characters presented will be created. The first category is called Principal Character. That is, the characters that have a main role in the reading and listening exercises (principal female character will be referred to as PFC and principal male character will be referred to as PMC). These characters are usually called by their names and use most of the text to talk about themselves or to give an opinion. There can be more than one principal character in each exercise and even though they appear to be equally important we can see that the amount of talk may vary, this will be analyzed in the section of amount of discourse, or number of words uttered later in the research.

The second category is called Minor Character, and these are those secondary roles that are mentioned by pronouns or by family member categories (mother, father, sister, husband, wife, friend). They are usually mentioned once or twice through the text and do not take up much space (Minor female character is abbreviated as MFC and Minor Male Character as MMC). For example, in Unit 4 there is a reading about a brother and a sister that go on a trip across the country. They are both the protagonists of the text. They describe their trip and some of their experiences and the only other person mentioned in the text is their mother. She is only mentioned once in the text because she worries about her son and daughter. In this case, two main characters (a female and a male) and one minor character (the mother, a female) were considered.

The characters that referred to both genders in the counting of characters were not included. For example, “children”, “parents”, or “siblings” will not be counted as characters since they make a balance between genders and would not represent a difference in numbers between females and males. It is important to add that it is difficult to determine the gender of some characters in the listening exercises since they are not specified in the transcript, and it is necessary to listen to the audios in order to identify the tone of voice to determine the gender in a binary paradigm. Moreover, the interviewers in the exercises are considered minor characters since they only asked questions and the topic of the conversation was never about them, but about the person being interviewed.

Code	Meaning
TFC	Total Female Characters
PFC	Principal Female Characters
MFC	Minor Female Characters
TMC	Total Male Characters
PMC	Principal Male Characters
MMC	Minor Male Characters

Table 1: Codes for characters.

After creating the codes, the characters in all the Reading and Listening exercises were counted and the data was emptied in Graphs. Then, graphics including number and percentages of all the categories were created in order to have a visual comparison of the number of females and males that were included in each of the categories.

Finally, a qualitative analysis about the numbers was made. We will decide whether there is balance or imbalance in the number of characters throughout the textbook. For the purpose of this study, more than 5% difference in numbers constitutes an imbalance.

Procedure for analyzing number and types of occupations by Gender

In this section, the total number of jobs that are performed by females and males through the textbook are presented. Then, there is an analysis of occupations that are mentioned and whether there is balance or imbalance in the mention of jobs done by females and males.

First, the number of occupations were counted in each Unit and emptied in Graphs that included the type of exercise and page where it was found in the textbook, and the name and number of the specific occupation that was assigned to either females or males. For example, 3 waiters and 2 pilots found in Unit 1.

Once the total number of occupations were identified, they were classified into six basic categories, as the following table shows.

Job Categories
Occupations that require a cognitive effort
Occupations that have to do with creativity or media
Occupations related to business and positions of power in a company
Occupations related to homecare
Mechanical occupations, and
Occupations related to sports.

Table 2: Job categories.

For example, if two company directors that are female were in the textbook, they were classified into business and positions of power within a company.

Then, graphics that include the category of the occupation and the number and percentage of occupations that fall into that category by gender were created. This will help us visualize clearly the differences of percentages between females and males.

Finally, an interpretation of the results was made. A decision about balance or imbalance in each category was mentioned. A difference of 5 percent was considered as imbalance within each category.

Procedure for number of pronouns by Gender analysis

Here, the number of pronouns by gender are counted in each of the listening and reading exercises one by one. Female pronouns: she, her, herself, hers, and the

Figure 1: Reading extract example to identify pronouns.

male pronouns: he, his, himself, him were counted. The first and second person pronouns: I, my, myself, mine, and You, your, yourself and were counted only in the cases that it was clearly specified that it was a woman or a man speaking. Refer to Figure 1 as an example.

Note that in the text we can identify that the person speaking is a male named Tom, so all the pronouns used in the first-person singular were considered in the male pronouns' numbers. From "*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*" by Kay, S., and Jones, V. , 2018, p.126 Copyright 2018 by McMillan Education.

After counting all the pronouns, they were put in Graphs by Unit and then counted at the end to come up with a total number of pronouns. Once we came up with the total number of pronouns of females and males a Graph with the percentages was created to have a final analysis about balance or imbalance in numbers. More than five percent difference in numbers was considered an imbalance.

Procedure for analyzing the number of photographs by Gender

In order to analyze the photographs shown in the textbook, they were counted by Unit and divided by gender to come up with a total number and the percentages of pictures used to depict women and men. It is important to add that there might have been pictures where the gender of the person was not revealed, that is, pictures where the person was facing back or pictures that showed gender neutral characteristics or that showed no evidence of gender. See Figure 2 as an example. In case that there was no balance between the number of pictures, the topics and the reasons why were analyzed to come up with a conclusion.

Observe that there's a person on top of a mountain, but it is not clear if it is a female or a male. On the other hand, the picture shown on the top right shows a female. From "*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*" by Kay, S., and Jones, V., 2018, p. 43 Copyright 2018 by McMillan Education.

SPEAKING: ANECDOTE

1 **Work with your partner. Discuss which of the following challenges you think is the most [illegible]. How many of these challenges have you had to face?**

- taking part in a race or a competition
- doing an audition for a part in a play
- performing on stage (acting, singing, etc.)
- giving a speech or a presentation
- taking an exam or a driving test
- attending a job interview
- traveling abroad on your own
- cooking dinner for lots of people
- asking somebody out on a date
- meeting your boyfriend or girlfriend's parents

2 **You are going to tell your partner about a time when you did something challenging.**

- Ask yourself the questions below.
- Think about what to say and how to say it.
- Tell your partner about your experience.

a What did you do?
b Why did you decide to do it?
c Was it your first time?
d How did you prepare for it?
e What were you most afraid of?
f How did you feel while you were doing it?
g Did anything go wrong? What?
h How did you feel afterwards?
i Was it as challenging as you thought it would be?
j Would you do it again?

UNIT 4 43

Figure 2: Example of gender-neutral pictures.

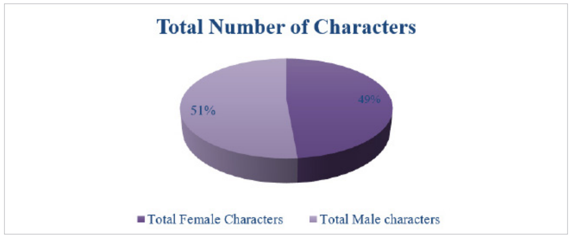
Analysis and results

As it was previously mentioned there are two categories of analysis: Gender Visibility and Gender Discourse. The first was analyzed through the subcategories of types of characters, types of occupations, pronouns, and photographs by gender. The second one was divided into words uttered by women and men, who is the conversation initiator, equality of conversations and stronger speaker. The results of each subcategory are shown through percentages of females and males in pastel graphs followed by a qualitative analysis of the results. The category of Gender visibility was analyzed through reading and listening exercises while the Gender discourse category was analyzed through the mixed gender dialogues presented in the textbook.

Gender Visibility: Analysis and results of types of characters by gender

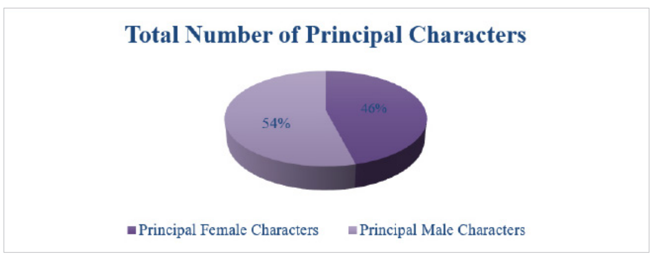
Total Female Characters	Principal Female Characters	Minor Female Characters	Total Male Characters	Principal Male Characters	Minor Male Characters
130	71	59	137	84	53

Table 3: Total Number of Characters.



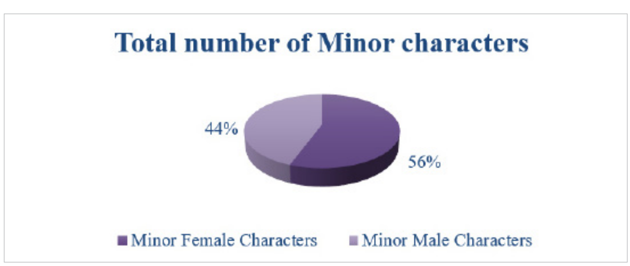
Graph 1: Total number of characters.

As can be seen, the total number of characters is balanced since there is only 2% difference in numbers. We concluded that out or 267 characters in total 130 are Female and 137 are Males.



Graph 2: Total number of principal characters.

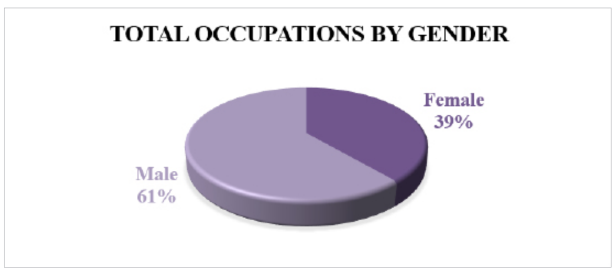
Observe that there is a difference of 8% between females and males. The total number of principal characters is 155 and 71 of them are females while 84 are males.



Graph 3: Total number of minor characters.

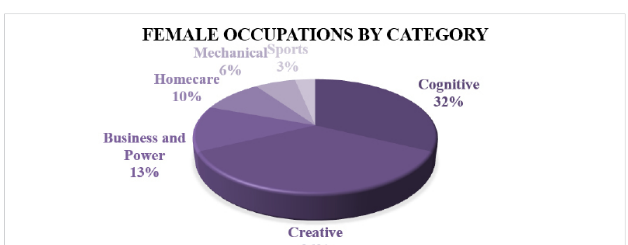
There are more Female Minor characters than Male. Out of 112 minor characters 59 are women and 53 are men. This is not necessarily a good thing since there is the tendency to portrait women as the supportive role or the character that does not take up much space or visibility. This can be an indicator of no visibility for women since there are more principal male characters. It would be important to also analyze the types of characters that are shown, which are addressed in the following section.

Gender Visibility: Analysis and Results of types of occupations by gender



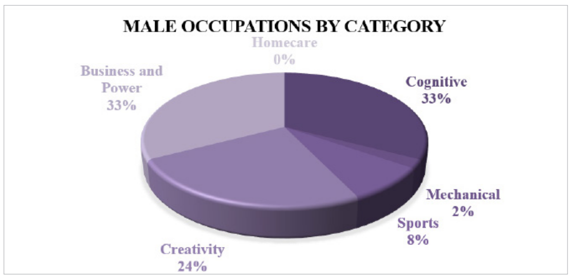
Graph 4: Total occupations by gender.

The total number of jobs done by women are 31 and the jobs done by men are 49 in the reading and listening exercises throughout the textbook. This means that 39% of the jobs mentioned are women and 61% are men. This is an imbalanced representation since there is 22% difference between the representation of Genders in the Textbook. These numbers suggest that the stereotype about men being the working force and women being housewives is still present.



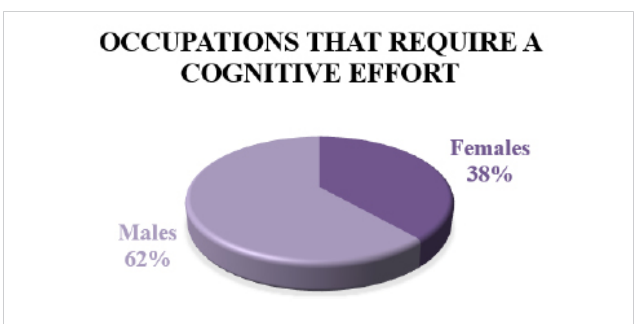
Graph 5: Female occupations by category.

The female occupations mentioned in the text were divided into those six categories. As we can see, the jobs that females did the most in the textbook were creative and cognitive. The rest of the occupations were divided into business, homecare, mechanical and sports. In figures 6-12 we analyzed one by one the categories comparing males and females.



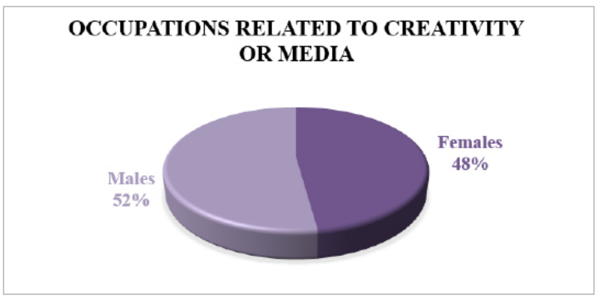
Graph 6: Male occupations by category.

Occupations performed by males in the textbook were mostly related to business and positions in power, next to cognitive jobs which represented 33%. Creative jobs followed with 24% and the last category was homecare which was not even represented or mentioned in the male occupations label.



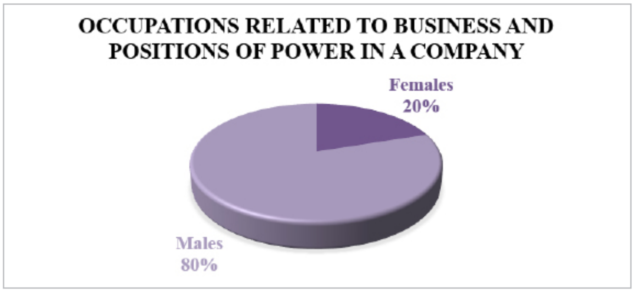
Graph 7: Occupations that require a cognitive effort.

There were twenty-seven jobs mentioned in the first category (occupations that require a cognitive effort), such as researchers, students, psychologists, surgeons, doctors, architects, archeologists, inventors, and pilots. Out of twenty seven mentions of cognitive jobs, eleven referred to females and sixteen to males. This means that only 38% of cognitive jobs are performed by women. Consequently, there was not a balance in genders in this area. Whereas the experts and thinkers such as inventors, researchers, archeologists, and architects were male, the females in this area were students, psychologists, and a cosmetic surgeon. The only female doctor was a cosmetic surgeon mentioned in Unit 8, who talked about the benefits of cosmetic surgery. Other than that, there were no examples of women working as doctors or researchers who give advice. This suggests that there were not enough examples of successful women and experts in science.



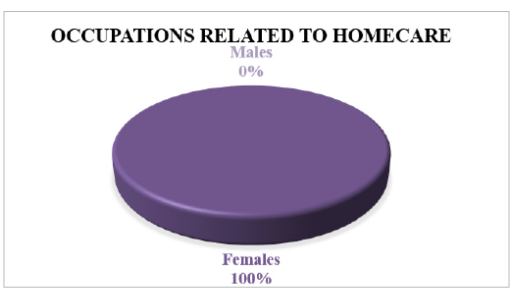
Graph 8: Occupations related to creativity or Media.

In this second category, females were mentioned 48%, whereas men were mentioned 52%. In total twenty-three mentions were made related to this category throughout the book. Out of these eleven were female and twelve were male. Some jobs included in this category were artists, journalists, interviewers, actresses, fashion designers, editors, tv presenters and singers. This category was somehow balanced since there was only 4% difference in the mentions between male and females, but there were more men mentioned.



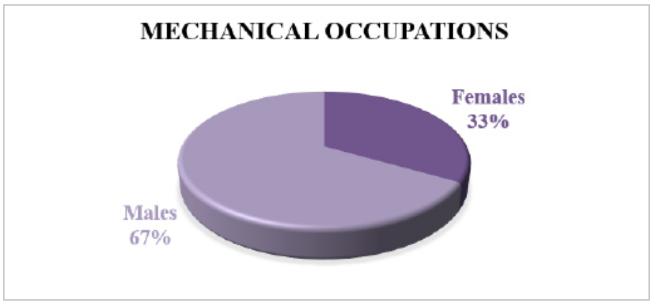
Graph 9: Occupations related to business and positions of power in a company.

Occupations related to business and positions of power in a company were analyzed and there were twenty jobs mentioned such as businessmen, employee, employer, network executive, marketing executive, company owner, politician, banker, human resources manager and school principal. Only four of these mentions referred to women and sixteen to men. The percentages, as presented in the graph were 20% for females and 80% for men. The jobs given to women were school principal, company owner, human resources manager and employer. This category was unbalanced since most of the positions of power and related to business were men exclusive. Consequently, this category represents an occupational category that was represented as male dominated.



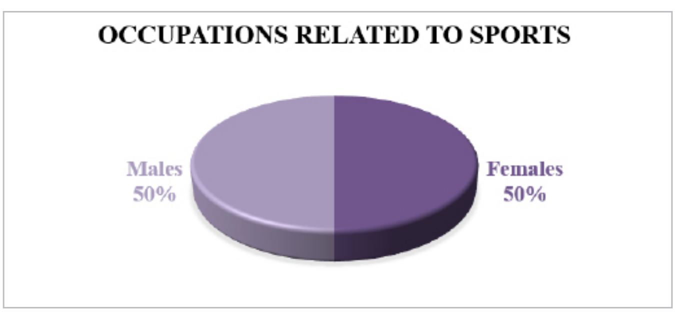
Graph 10: Occupations related to homecare.

The fourth category is related to homecare. The jobs mentioned in the book related to this category were stay at home mom and *au pair* (nanny). Only three mentions were made and all of them were related to females. This category was still totally attributed to women. The textbook reflected that only females did this type of job and males were not even mentioned. This gender stereotype pictured women as the only responsible for the caring and administration of home related occupations.



Graph 11: Mechanical occupations.

This category (mechanical occupations) included jobs such as miner, secretary, waiter, and waitress. There were only six mentions in the textbook and two were related to women and four to men. The graphic shows that women represent only 33% of these jobs whereas men 67%. This shows the tendency to attribute physical jobs to men, which is also an occupational stereotype.



Graph 12: Occupations related to sports.

The occupations related to sports were tennis player and basketball player. One female and one male. The topic of sports was not discussed in any unit and only those couple of jobs were mentioned. As we can see in the graphic the representation is 50/50 which means that there is balance in genders related to sports occupations.

Gender Visibility: Analysis and Results of Pronouns by Gender

Female pronouns that were counted in the reading and listening exercises were: She, her, herself, hers. The male pronouns that were counted in the reading and listening exercises were: He, his, himself, him. The first and second person pronouns: I, my, myself, mine, and You, your, yourself and yours were counted only in the cases that it was clearly specified that it was a woman or a man speaking.

Total number of Female Pronouns	Total number of Male pronouns
797	864
48%	52%

Table 4: Total number of Pronouns.

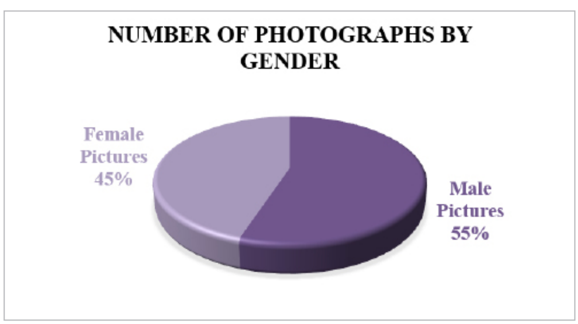
Graph 13: Pronouns by Gender.

There was a difference of 4% between the female and male pronouns. Male pronoun numbers were slightly more than female ones which indicates that there is somehow balance in the visibility of males and females throughout the book in this category.

Gender Visibility: Analysis and Results of photographs by gender

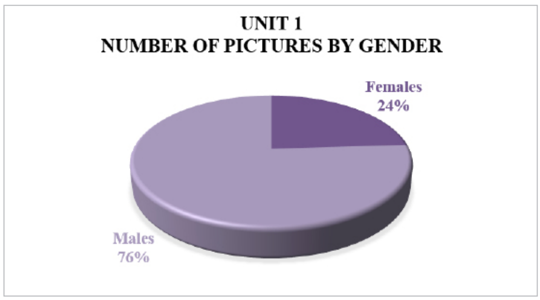
Unit Name	Number of Females in pictures	Number of Males in pictures	Unknown gender
Unit 1	***6***	***19***	***2***
Unit 2	10	12	1
Unit 3	8	9	0
Unit 4	6	3	1
Unit 5	14	12	0
Unit 6	4	9	2
Unit 7	9	5	0
Unit 8	***21***	***5***	***0***
Unit 9	6	8	0
Unit 10	11	13	4
Unit 11	9	15	2
Unit 12	7	2	0
Total Number of Characters	***111***	***136***	***12***

Table 5: Total Number of photographs by gender.



Graph 14: Number of photographs by gender.

As it can be seen in the graph above the total number of characters was somehow balanced, showing that out of 249 pictures displayed throughout the book 111 correspond to women. That is 45 % of the pictures showing women. And 136 corresponded to men, making it a representation of 55%. The number of pictures was balanced in most of the units, but it is important to analyze the units that show a major difference in numbers which are Unit 1 called “Impressions” and Unit 8 called “Attraction”.



Graph 15: Unit 1: Number of pictures by gender.

Unit 1 talks about jobs, job interviews, resumés and the impression we get when we meet someone at a job interview. As it can be seen in the graph above, there was a big difference in the number of pictures between females and males. Most of the pictures shown in these Unit were powerful or popular men. Refer to Figure 3 as an example.

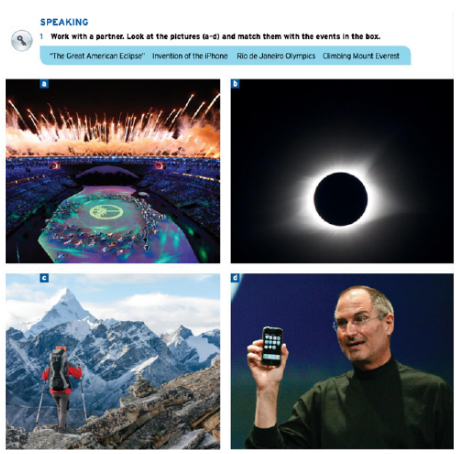


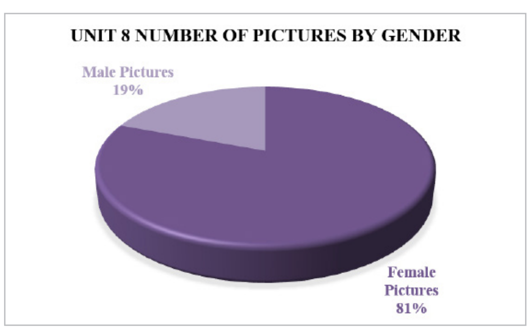
Figure 3: Example of pictures in Unit 1.

In the first activity of the Unit, we can find a picture of Steve Jobs and no women portrayed as to have been part of a major event in the world. From "*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*" by Kay, S., and Jones, V. , 2018, p.8. Copyright 2018 by McMillan Publishers.

Figure 4: Example of male pictures.

The book takes a whole page to talk about a famous star: Adam Lavigne. He is represented in four pictures and is talked about in all the vocabulary and reading exercises. From "*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*" by Kay, S., and Jones, V. ,2018, pp.12 and 13. Copyright 2018 by McMillan Publishers.

Unit 1 in the textbook American Inside out Revolution represented a major imbalance between genders, not only because of the number of pictures, but also the type of pictures. The topic of the Unit is related to work and popularity and the images that represent those topics are white males only.



Graph 16: Unit 8: Number of Pictures by Gender.

Unit 8 “Attraction” is focused on the topic of beauty and attraction. It includes adjectives to describe physical appearance, topics on cosmetic surgery, total make overs and personality traits. As it can be seen most of the pictures were women (81 %). Women were shown to be important because of their physical appearance. Refer to Figure 5 as an example.

Figure 5: Examples of female pictures in Unit 8 “Is Beauty Just Skin Deep”.

In the extensive reading of the Unit, several pictures of women who show different skin tones were shown. Beauty in this unit was only attributed to women and not men. From “*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*” by Kay, S., and Jones, V. ,2018, p. 83. Copyright 2018 by McMillan Publishers.

Total Makeover Changed my Life!

“I am forty-five years old. Divided between my family and my career, I neglected to look after myself along the way. One year ago, I took a long, hard look in the mirror and realized that my hairstyle and clothes were tired and outdated. I needed to make some changes.

First, I (1) _had_ had my hair cut and colored. I hadn't been to a hairdresser in years. The results were absolutely amazing - I looked years younger, as if I (2) _____ had a facelift. Next, I (3) _____ my colors done. This is a consultation which tells you the best colors and combinations for your clothes and makeup. I then set out, over several weekends and trips to many different stores, to build up a decent wardrobe. To get the best look possible, I (4) _____ some of the clothes adjusted, taken in at the waist, or shortened to suit me better. To complete the process, I (5) _____ my teeth whitened over a three month period. My doctor also recommended that I (6) _____ my skin treated with a chemical peel, but I (7) _____ had that done yet. Finally, I went down to the mall and (8) _____ my makeup done by a professional.

Before the makeover, I was invisible. I hadn't really invested time and money to look good. Now, I look and feel ten years younger. I feel energetic and hopeful. Who would guess that a simple makeover could do that.”

Figure 6: Examples of female pictures in Unit 8 “Total Makeover Changed my Life!”.

This is a short reading about total makeovers. The makeovers are only performed by women according to the article and the picture that represents this topic is a woman. In the reading, a woman talks about how a total makeover changed her life. She mentions how before she felt "invisible" an after the makeover she feels energetic and hopeful. This not only tells us that once a woman is older and has apparently lost her beauty and youth is not seen, but it reinforces the idea that women must look young and beautiful to be noticed. From "*American Inside Out Evolution. Upper Intermediate Level*" by Kay, S., and Jones, V., 2018, p. 85. Copyright 2018 by McMillan Publishers.

In general terms, we can conclude that even though the number of pictures in the book show balance, certain units, and the topics they talk about represent gender stereotypes that are no longer useful to society. It shows that men are supposed to work, to be successful and popular using their mental abilities and that women are only valued when they are young and beautiful.

Conclusions

The main objective of the present study was to analyze the ELT textbook "American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate" student's book used at the largest public University in the state of Michoacán in order to find out whether there is balance of genders throughout the text. After presenting the quantitative and qualitative results of the study we can conclude that there are certain domains that show balance whereas there are others that still have room for improvement.

In terms of characters and occupations, we discovered that the text shows balance in number of male and female characters presented, but once we analyzed the occupations, we could notice that there are areas that need to be analyzed more critically and portrayed in a more balanced way. The business and positions of power were predominated by males showing that 80% of those positions were occupied by males. Moreover, there were no males presented as care takers or in charge of homecare. The percentage of females in charge of this area was 100%. These findings keep perpetuating harmful stereotypes of genders that dictate that males cannot be responsible of home chores and women cannot have positions of power and business.

On the other hand, when analyzing the number of pictures by gender we discovered that most of them were about males (55%) but when talking about beauty, 81% of the pictures were about women. Furthermore, the topics included in the unit related to beauty had all to do with beauty related to women only. This is also a topic that could be analyzed more profoundly, can there be a balance between genders regarding this matter? Could we stop repeating the idea that women must look good to be successful? Regarding pictures related to famous and successful people due to their jobs and talent, they were all about males. From Steve Jobs to Adam Levine, the unit about jobs was full of male pictures. Could there be a balance showing pictures of successful women in the work field? Could women that work in areas related to leadership, science and technology be included?

After analyzing all these gender related topics within the textbook American Inside Out Evolution Upper-Intermediate, it is strongly suggested to consider the following remedial actions: 1) to balance the number of occupations by gender; 2) to balance cognitive occupations, and occupations related to business and power by including more women who carry out those jobs; 3) to include examples of males as home care takers or in charge of home chores such as cleaning, doing the dishes, or taking care of children; 4) to show females experts who give advice in diverse areas of knowledge such as leadership, science, politics, and technology; 5) to include pictures that show powerful and talented women who are successful because of their skills and not because of their looks; 6) to include more men who take care of their looks.

It is important to recognize the limitations of the present study. One of the disadvantages when carrying out the research was that only one of the textbooks out of eight included in the whole series was analyzed. If the eight books were considered, we would be able to have more concise results in terms of gender balance and more advise could have been given. Unfortunately, due to the extension of the analysis and the diverse areas included, time did not allow for a complete analysis of the series.

Studies on gender representations in textbooks can be helpful for teachers, directors and administrators of universities, curriculum, and textbook designers since in the end, all of their ideas impact educational policies and society. We would suggest teachers to become critical of the textbooks they are forced to use in the classroom. Try to question everything about the validity of the book in terms of topics, pictures, roles of people and inclusion. It would also be a good idea to adapt the textbook to the needs of the class and to suggest students to think critically about the contents as well. In addition to this, it would be extremely helpful if school directors decide to train educators on acquiring strategies to adapt materials to fit the needs of the class and to choose texts carefully, especially when the texts must be completely covered during the school year. Curriculum designers and text designers should have to adopt a more inclusive and fair strategies when designing textbooks. They might not only include balanced number of pictures and words between genders, but also carefully choose topics that represent genders in a more neutral way. This can help the future users of the textbooks and students to develop an enriched and open perspective about genders; a perspective that knows no limits when achieving dreams and that empowers students to do whatever they want to do no matter what gender they have.

Finally, the future of Gender Representation analysis does not have to be limited to textbooks or materials. It is advisable to extend this analysis to the classroom by becoming aware of who speaks more in class by gender, who is listened and viewed as an expert or who the teacher elicits more information from. These areas could also be analyzed when lessons are planned. As educators, we can consciously decide to construct a classroom environment that is gender neutral and to try to balance the voice of girls by giving equal opportunities for participation and leadership in the classroom. This can be an example in the classroom that might hopefully be reproduced in the everyday life of students.

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Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation, and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused on the Board Game Strategy

Karen Andrea García Bobadilla

Abstract

Divergent educational policies have been adopted in Mexico, being the most recent the *Nuevo Modelo Educativo 2017,* as the main pedagogical directory provided to professors inserted in the Basic Education System. Although communicative theoretical fundamentals have been conceived for the consolidation of the subject matter *Lengua Extranjera. Inglés,* the major percentage of institutions pertaining to the Basic Education System do not count with the privilege of receiving English courses, specifically in elementary level. As a result, little orientations in the research field have been found. In the Urban Elementary School 154 "Tomás Escobedo", particularly the group 5°A, fundamental linguistic elements have been analyzed. Notwithstanding, articulation, pronunciation and intelligibility are considered opportunity areas, taking as a reference their absence in the *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera. Inglés*. Learners do not recognize properly the *voiceless alveolar fricative* /s/ and the *voiceless postalveolar fricative* /ʃ/, being confused with /z/ or /ʧ/. Once established the previous information, the decision of creating a game-based learning proposal focused on the usage of the board game strategy was taken. General results asseverate the effectiveness of the methodology proposed, manifesting pertinently in the areas of articulation, pronunciation, and intelligibility.

Keywords: *Articulation, Pronunciation, Intelligibility, Game-Based Learning, Board Game Strategy.*

Introduction

The Public Basic Education in Mexico has faced the continuous adjustment and reconstruction of different paradigmatic visions as a product of divergent educational policies throughout generations. Parallel to the incorporation of the Reforma Educativa, the *Modelo Educativo 2016* and the *Nuevo Modelo Educativo 2017* emerged gradually, being the articulation axes of the actual components, objectives, and generalities towards the learning processes in children and teenagers (NNA: *niños niñas y adolescentes*) registered in the public system.

On the report, the *Nuevo Modelo Educativo 2017* advocates the formation of Mexican citizens that consolidate themselves as participative, responsible, informed; capable of exerting and defending their rights. As an ensuing causative, the graduate profile in the *Nuevo Modelo Educativo 2017* contemplates a total of eleven ambits corresponding to general knowledge areas. The ambit *Lenguaje y comunicación*, constituted of the ensuing subjects: a) *Lengua Materna. Español*, b) *Lengua Materna. Lengua Indígena*, c) *Segunda Lengua. Lengua Indígena*, d) *Segunda Lengua. Español*, and e) *Lengua Extranjera. Inglés*; orients the linguistic teaching practice. As manifested, *Lenguaje y comunicación* provides the reference framework for the subject *Lengua Extranjera. Inglés* or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Basic Education Curriculum, which inclusion has resulted in the establishment of curricular and pedagogic precisions in order to generate advances towards the acquisition of communicative linguistic skills.

Particularly, the oficial document *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera Inglés* conceives the existence of two general stages. The first one aims to promote the familiarization and contact with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at initial educational grades. The second one intends to achieve basic levels of competence and command of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Both, being the point of conjunction for the establishment of the general purpose: the acquisition of linguistic skills, knowledge, attitudes, and strategies to participate and interact in oral and written practices of the language; proper of several communicative and cultural contexts (SEP, 2017, p. 165). The emphasis of this research is the *primary or elementary level*.

As observed, the oficial document *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera Inglés* advocates for the approach based on social practices of the language: *Familiar y comunitario*, *Lúdico y literario*, and *Académico y de formación*. Namely, the foreign language is not an abstract subject of speculations, but a socialization instrument (Fernández & Sonsoles, 2011, p. 14; in SEP, 2017, p. 170), in which learners acquire English through the linguistic usage by itself in communicative interactions proximate to the reality.

The analysis previously performed, enables to presume that, even if *articulation*, *pronunciation* and *intelligibility* are central aspects of communication that should be perceived as a basic and value-added factor in social, academic, and professional contexts (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 22), the aforementioned areas do not appear as proper elements inside the curriculum: *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera Inglés*. Being, such relevant linguistic skills, taken as granted in the production of communicative exchanges in the foreign language. As well, as one of the major concerns in the actual investigation article.

The reality faced in the Urban Elementary School 154 "Tomás Escobedo"

The Urban Elementary School 154 «Tomás Escobedo» (CCT 14EPR0173Q), established in Guadalajara, Jalisco, and founded on February 19th, 1969; belongs to the School Zone 83, the Educational Sector 04, the position 1038 in the state, and morning shift. The educational institution possesses a complete teaching organization; and it is compound by a total of 568 students; being established as one of the schools with the highest student enrollment in the area, according to information obtained from RECREA, the official platform in which consultation of metrics, statistics and general data of the institutions paired to the Secretaría de Educación Jalisco is offered. The institution is mixed, a complete number of 290 women, and 278 men attend.

Bearing in mind the state, municipal, and institutional context, and as a product of a decision and personal objectives; Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) was introduced in the Urban Elementary School 154 «Tomás Escobedo» for the first time during the school year 2019-2020, possessing continuity in the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school cycles. In the actual cycle, 2021-2022, the group privileged with English classes, was identified as 5°A.

The Urban Elementary School «154 Tomás Escobedo», up to 2022, has not been considered for its incorporation in the *Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI)*. Consequently, it has been in absence of a particular English teacher integrated in the institution. Nonetheless, English is taught in the group of 5°A, maintaining a workload of four weekly sessions, as the result of a personal curricular decision. Its teaching is directly concerned with the principles and objectives established in the Nuevo *Modelo Educativo (2017)*, contemplating the syllabus of *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera Inglés*.

The contents analyzed during the cycle 2021-2022 correspond to fundamental linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, parts of the speech, and the simple present tense; emphasizing communicative functions. They are located at the A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Notwithstanding, *articulation*, *pronunciation* and *intelligibility* are considered opportunity areas, taking into account their absence in the *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral. Lengua Extranjera Inglés*. Students do not recognize properly the *voiceless alveolar fricative* /s/ and the *voiceless postalveolar fricative* /ʃ/, being confused with /z/ or /ʧ/. Problematic appreciated in oral communicative exchanges proposed in regular sessions, and origin for the application of the research work "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused on the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level», that will be explicitly described next. The main objective of the current research is the ensuing:

- To design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a game-based learning proposal focused on the usage of the board game strategy with emphasis in articulation, pronunciation, and intelligibility in a group of fifth grade, elementary level.

The subsidiary objectives of the study are conceived as:

- To analyze the articulation and pronunciation of the *voiceless alveolar fricative* /s/ and the *voiceless postalveolar fricative* /ʃ/, in students of fifth grade, elementary level.

- To determine the levels of intelligibility in students of fifth grade, elementary level; employing the *Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability*.

Place of articulation, manner of articulation, and intensity of articulation

To establish a conceptualization, "the *place of articulation* names the speech organs that are primarily involved in the production of a particular sound" (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 13). Simply put, the place of articulation is the conjunction of mechanisms in the speech apparatus utilized in order to emit a series of particular sounds in a given linguistic utterance.

According to both authors, Skandera & Burleigh, it is possible to mention that "there are thirteen possible places of articulation in the languages of the world… They are usually labelled according to the immobile, upper speech organ used in their production. The mobile, lower speech organs always lie directly opposite" (2005, p. 20).

In order to generate a major generalization of the sounds, properly categorized in a diversity of ***phonemes***, "linguists have developed systems of phonetic transcription in which each sound is represented by just one symbol and each symbol represents just one sound" (Radford et. al., 2009, p. 28). The transcription system of the *International Phonetics Association*, generally referred to as the IPA, is the usual phonological system conveyed.

In extend, English language does not possess the capability to employ the totality of sounds previously mentioned. Nonetheless, the ensuing correspond to the majority of sounds utilized in English linguistic utterances: (1) bilabial, (2) labiodental, (3) dental or interdental, (4) alveolar, (5) postalveolar, (6) retroflex, (7) palatoalveolar, (8) palatal, (9) velar, (10) pharyngeal, also pharyngal, and (11) glottal.

Skandera and Burleigh offer a broad view on the sounds emitted in English language:

(1) ***Bilabial*** sounds are produced with both lips.

(2) ***Labiodental*** sounds are produced by a movement of the lower lip against the upper teeth.

(3) ***Dental***, or ***interdental***, sounds are made with the tongue tip and rims between the upper and lower teeth or against the upper teeth.

(4) ***Alveolar*** sounds are made with the tongue tip coming near or touching the bony ridge behind the upper teeth, called the alveolar ridge.

(5) ***Postalveolar*** sounds are made with the tongue tip approaching or touching the rear of the alveolar ridge or the area just behind it.

(6) ***Retroflex*** are produced when the tip of the tongue is curled back to approach or contact the front part of the roof of the mouth, called the hard palate just behind the alveolar ridge.

(7) ***Palatoalveolar*** sounds are made with the tongue tip touching the alveolar ridge, and with a simultaneous raising of the blade of the tongue towards the hard palate.

(8) ***Palatal*** sounds are produced when the body of the tongue comes near or touches the (hard) palate.

(9) ***Velar*** sounds are made by placing the back of the tongue against or near the velum, or soft palate.

(10) ***Pharyngeal***, also ***pharyngal***, sounds are made when the root of the tongue is pulled back in the pharynx.

(11) ***Glottal*** sounds are produced in the larynx when air passes through the glottis (2005, pp. 20-22).

An additional aspect to consider is the *manner of articulation*, which refers to the degree to which the airstream is blocked at the place of articulation in consonants (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 12). Considering the information established by both authors, there are different manners of articulation that consolidate an egressive pulmonic air-stream mechanism, being categorized as follows:

(1) ***Plosives***, or ***stops***, are sounds for which the speaker makes a complete closure at some point in the vocal tract, builds up the air pressure while the closure is held, and then releases the air explosively through the mouth.

(2) ***Affricates*** are sounds that consist of two elements. The first element is a plosive. This means that affricates, too, require a complete closure in the vocal tract, but the air is released slowly enough to produce friction, which we hear as a hissing s-like sound. This second element is articulated in the same place, i.e. with the same speech organs, as the preceding plosive. We therefore say that the two elements are homorganic sounds.

(3) ***Nasals*** have a complete closure in the vocal tract as well. They stand out from all other English phonemes, however, in that the velum, or soft palate, is lowered, so that air escapes through the nose. In the production of English nasals, usually *all* the air escapes through the nose.

(4) ***Rolls,*** or ***trills***, involve an intermittent closure of the speech organs in the vocal tract. Rolls are produced when one articulator vibrates against another.

(5) ***Flaps***, or ***taps***, involve a single flap by one articulator against another. There are no flapped phonemes in English, but there are some pronunciation variants that are produced in this way.

(6) ***Fricatives*** are made when air forces its way through a very narrow gap between two speech organs, thereby producing audible friction: slit fricatives and groove fricatives.

(7) ***Laterals***, or more specifically ***lateral approximants***, are also made with air that escapes around the sides of a partial closure of the speech organs, but the air passage is not quite as narrow as in lateral fricatives.

(8) ***Approximants*** are generally made with a wider gap between the speech organs than is the case in the production of fricatives. The speech organs approach other, but they do not touch each other (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, pp. 22-24).

At last, the *intensity of articulation* is identified as the variations of force with which the airstream is pushed up (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 12). It is plausible to identify the presence of two distinctive intensity grades. The first, *lenis articulation*, characterized by the usage of relatively weak breath force, and a minimum of muscular tension, producing a voiced sound. The second, *fortis articulation*, produced with more force or higher tension, emanating a voiceless sound.

Place of articulation, *manner of articulation*, and *intensity of articulation* are considered the phonological characteristics or constituents of the English phonemes; being essential concepts while considering the processes of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) with emphasis in pronunciation and phonological awareness. As the main problematic, students from the group 5°A, in the Urban Elementary School "154 Tomás Escobedo", are not capable of recognizing properly the *voiceless alveolar fricative* /s/ and the *voiceless postalveolar fricative* /ʃ/; being generally transformed into other phonemes with similar characteristics: the *voiced alveolar fricative* /z/ and the *voiceless postalveolar affricate* /ʧ/. The problematic has been appreciated in oral communicative exchanges proposed in regular lessons of the subject matter *Lengua Extranjera. Inglés*; considered the origin for the application of the proposed research work "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level» that will be explicitly described in consecutive sections.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the action of executing speech sounds to produce a communicative message (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; in Tlazalo & Basurto, 2014, p. 153).

As a communicative feature taught regularly in the English subject, and other linguistic matters around the globe, its occurrence has historically fluctuated in the diversity of educational curriculums and syllabuses. It is relevant to express, that pronunciation has been identified as a principal component of English language teaching for decades. During the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s was the main educational stream in the audiolingual methodology permeating in the US, and the system of situational language teaching adopted in Britain (Morley, 1991, p. 484).

The author provides a detailed panorama on the linguistic perspective adopted, influencing the curricular and pedagogic decisions related to pronunciation lessons:

> In general, language was viewed as consisting of hierarchies of structurally related items for encoding meaning. Language learning was viewed as mastering these forms, the building blocks of language, along with the combining rules for phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences. The pronunciation class in this view was one that gave primary attention to phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, environmental allophonic variations, and combinatory phonotactic rules, along with structurally based attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation (Morley, 1991, p. 484).

In that extend, pronunciation was given a meaningful purpose in English Language Teaching (ELT), being based in the instruction through articulatory explanations, imitation, memorization of patterns while drilling or participating in specific dialogues with extensive attention to corrective actions implemented by the language professor. "The major change that has occurred today in many innovative programs is one that abandons the notion of an articulatory phonetics approach as the conceptual basis for teaching pronunciation" (Morley, 1991, p. 485).

In the late 1960s, continuing in the 1970s and the early 1980s, significant interrogations appeared in contrast with the pedagogical asseverations related to pronunciation and phonological awareness in English Language Teaching (ELT), promoting a different view from previous periods. "… New pedagogical sights were set on language functions, communicative competence, task-based methodologies, and realism and authenticity in learning activities and materials" (Morley, 1991, p. 485).

From the mid-1980s and into the 1990s, pronunciation was revisited as a relevant component of English Language Teaching (ELT), and English as a Second Language (ESL); particularly for curriculums dedicated to adults and young adults. Adding, as well, pronunciation development in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in academic and occupational settings (Morley, 1991, p. 487).

Nowadays, pronunciation still acquires a significant role in the execution and consolidation of English linguistic abilities. There is a renewed commitment to enhance pupils to be effective and participative members of English-speaking communities, which means that pronunciation "… is a much more important and pervasive feature than is generally recognized. It is the crucial starting point for all spoken language, since thoughts must be articulated in sound in order to be heard and so to become a message…" (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 1).

In consonance, pronunciation should not be merely considered as a central communicative aspect to master, but as an area that once dominated, should result fructiferous and provoke positive interactions and add value or impact in life aspects that require linguistic exchanges among individuals. "It is therefore an important basic as well as value-added factor for much of social, academic, and professional life centering on spoken language communication" (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 22).

Additionally, pronunciation is performed as an essential aspect of the identity an individual possess; being tied to several particularities, such as region and country of precedence and residence, ethnicity, and cultural, educational, or professional backgrounds (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 23). Hence, the absence of linguistic consolidation could "… lead to serious miscommunication, misunderstanding, and negative attitudes and also be an aspect of negative and discriminatory linguistic profiling and the various types of social disadvantaging and discrimination that are associated with negative assessments of a person's language" (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 22).

On the positive side of the picture, in the last decades, new perspectives on pronunciation and pronunciation teaching have appeared (Morley, 1991, P. 481); being the point of departure to the creation and spread of contemporary methodologies that do not promote the reductionist view of articulatory phonetics. Purists of the language tend to diminish the value of pronunciation with minimal or major phonological discrepancies, differing from the idealistic native or near native-like pronunciation. Morley's asseverations acquire seriousness then: "*What is perfect? And which native speaker are we talking about?* Since everyone speaks their language with an accent. This is particularly significant today with many serviceable and respected Englishes existing throughout the world…" (Morley, 1991, p. 499).

Considering the previously stated, "learning a second or additional language means acquiring a new way of communicating and presenting oneself that can open a person's identity to change" (Pennington, 2018, p. 94; in Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 23). The malleability resulting offers individuals the capability to explore linguistic and communicative features, unsurprisingly generating diverse accents and prosody attached to social and cultural attributes of English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL, EFL), and the associated discourses.

Intelligibility

Taking into consideration the contributions of Derwin and Munro (2015), "in the last twenty years, … both research and practice have placed a sustained emphasis on *intelligibility*, perhaps because there is now empirical evidence, first, that few adult learners ever achieve native-like pronunciation in the L2 … and second, that intelligibility and accentedness are partially independent… "(in Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 23).

Intelligibility, identified as the degree of understanding and recognition of the linguistic units emitted in the oral communication (Gooskens & Van Heuven, n.d., p. 51), is considered as the new pedagogical and curricular goal in current educational trends. As Harmer affirms "concentrating on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making students aware of where words should be stressed – all these things give extra information about spoken English and help them achieve the goal of improved comprehension and intelligibility" (2007, p. 248).

As already expressed, intelligibility may be observed in a divergence of ranges or degrees, in oral communicative exchanges. The *Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability* (Morley, 1991, p. 502) is an evaluation tool proposed to identify the levels in which the learner adequate their linguistic exchanges in oral communication, identifying the general characteristics in expression and orality. It is possible to identify the appearance of three communicative thresholds: *Communicative Threshold A* (first and second level), *Communicative Threshold B* (third and fourth level), and *Communicative Threshold C* (fifth and sixth level).

As a matter of fact, the *first level* is identified as *unintelligibility in speech*, where only an occasional word or phrase can be recognized; being accent the prelude of functional oral communication. The *second level*, by itself, is considered as *largely unintelligible speech*, in which great listener effort is required in terms of constant repetitions and verification; being accent the causative of severe interference in oral communication.

The third level is determined as *reasonably intelligible speech*, in which significant listener effort is required due to speaker's pronunciation or grammatical errors that may impede communication and provoke listener distraction; being accent the origin of frequent interference with communication through the combined effect of mispronunciation and variants in speech patterns. The *fourth level* is promoted as *largely intelligible speech*, with sound and prosodic variances that can be understood if listeners concentrate on the message; being accent the beginning of interference at distraction level on the novelty of the speech pattern.

Finally, the *fifth level* is confirmed as *fully intelligible speech*, with occasional sound and prosodic variances that do not function as a serious distraction for the listener; being accent a minuscule interference and speech functional for effective communication. In the last instance, the *sixth level* is encouraged as *"near-native" speech*, in which minimal features of divergence can be detected, and sound as well as prosodic patterns are similar to native speakers; being accent virtually nonexistent. The Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability is then, a practical metric to determine and evaluate intelligibility in learners.

Aside from intelligibility, the concepts of comprehensibility and interpretability deserve the obtaining recognition. First, "comprehensibility… is defined by Munro et al. (2006) as the "listener's estimation of difficulty in understanding an utterance" (p. 112; in Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 43). Second, "interpretability is the listener's ability to understand the speaker's intentions in terms of the communicative function or pragmatic force of the message, requiring functional and situational knowledge and knowledge of language-specific contextualization cues that signal metamessages." (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 46). In conjunction, the three aspects (intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability) guarantee the general comprehension of utterances in oral interaction, being intelligibility the main aspect of pronunciation that captivates the interest of the research work "Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) with Emphasis in Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility within the Urban Elementary School 154 «Tomás Escobedo». A Record on the Achievements of a Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Usage of the Board Game Strategy in a Group of Fifth Grade, Elementary Level".

Learner Goals in Terms of Pronunciation and Intelligibility

Chastain (1980; in Morley, 1991, pp. 499-500) asserts the existence of a series of *learner goals* in terms of pronunciation. In the first, *Goal 1: Functional intelligibility*, the intent is to help learners to develop spoken English that is (at least) reasonably easy to understand and not distracting to listeners. In the second, *Goal 2: Functional communicability*, the intent is to help the learners develop spoken English that serves his or her individual communicative needs effectively for a feeling of communicative competence.

By its part, in *Goal 3: Increased self-confidence*, the intent is to help learners become more comfortable and confident in using spoken English, and to help them develop a positive self-image as a competent nonnative speaker of English and growing feeling of empowerment in oral communication. While in the last, *Goal 4: Speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom*, the aim is to help learners develop speech awareness, personal speech monitoring skills, and speech adjustment strategies that will enable them to continue to develop intelligibility, communicability, and confidence outside class as well as inside. The totality of goals, punctuated by Chastain (1980), serve not only as a comprehension subject, but as a reference framework for the pedagogical decisions in pronunciation teaching.

Learner Goals in Pronunciation		
Goal 1	Functional intelligibility	Develop spoken English that is reasonably easy to understand.
Goal 2	Functional communicability	Develop spoken English that serves the individual communicative needs.
Goal 3	Increased self-confidence	Develop a positive self-image as a competent nonnative speaker.
Goal 4	Speech monitoring abilities and modification strategies beyond the classroom	Develop speech awareness to continue to develop intelligibility, communicability, and confidence outside.

Table 1. Learner goals in pronunciation. Adapted from Morley (1991, p. 500).

Teacher Role in Terms of Pronunciation and Intelligibility

The *role of the teacher* is generally perceived as one of assisting learners' pronunciation, similar to the actions performed by a coach, a speech coach, or pronunciation coach. "A coach characteristically supplies information, gives models from time to time, offers cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about performance, sets high standards, provides a wide variety of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourages the learner" (Morley, 1991, p. 507).

"The pronunciation/speech coach has the critical role of monitoring and guiding modifications of spoken English at two levels, as noted earlier: (a) speech production (i.e., the microlevel) and (b) speech performance (i.e., the macrolevel)" (Morley, 1991, p. 507). It is relevant to affirm that, as Morley shares, articulatory phonetics is not abandoned, but inserted as a singular element in the whole communicative process of exchanging a particular message or meaning.

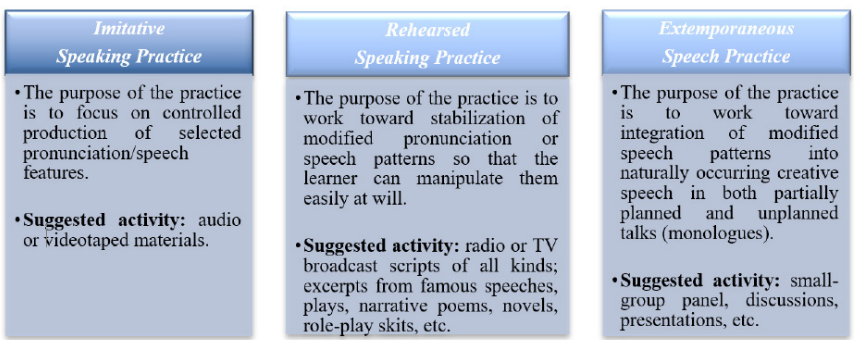
Subsequently, the responsibilities of the teacher as a coach, as Morley (1991, p. 508) advocates are the ensuing: 1. Conducting pronunciation or speech diagnostic analysis, choosing and prioritizing the features that will enable a noticeable impact and modification to speech intelligibility, 2. Helping students to set long-range and short-term objectives regards pronunciation, 3. Designing a scope and sequences for the entire group where the teaching practice is developed, establishing personalized assistance for individual learner. 4. Developing a diversity of instructional formats, modes and modules to enhance the integrity of the group, and carefully chosen simulated contexts. 5. Planning real-world extemporaneous speaking practice. 6. Structuring speaking activities in class where guests participate. 7. Providing models, cues and suggestions for the modification of speech patterns. 8. Monitoring speech production and performance of the learner. 9. Encouraging speech awareness in the student and realistic self-monitoring; and 10. Supporting the efforts of the learner even if success does not appear yet.

As to consolidate the responsibilities embedded in the role of the teacher as a coach, and to generate the maximum effect, "… pronunciation/speech instruction must go far beyond imitation; it calls for a mix of practice activities" (Morley, 1991, p. 505). Consequently, "a pronunciation/ speech syllabus can be planned to provide a variety of speaking and listening tasks and activities… (Morley, 1991, p. 509). There are *three kinds of speech practice*, reported by Morley, that can be introduced from the beginning of the process derived from Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (TESL, TEFL). All of them are described in detail ensuing:

The *imitative practice* is regularly used as needed, considering the oral skills and phonological awareness in learners; being regularly introduced as a short-term component in conjunction with rehearsed and extemporaneous practice. The imitative practice is purely a dependent practice, reason why it is employed vastly at initial levels, reducing its occurrence in more advanced or intermediate learners. "The purpose of the practice is to focus on controlled production of selected pronunciation/speech features" (Morley, 1991, p. 509); including self-access audios, videotaped materials, computer program speech-analysis systems, and so.

The *rehearsed practice*, as a main objective, works towards the stabilization of modified pronunciation or speech patterns, in example discrete-point features and global features, which main result is the ease of manipulation in oral production executed by the learner. The rehearsed practice stage may include a diversity of strategies, such as "… oral reading scripts of a wide variety, either teacher-selected or self-selected or composed by teachers and/or students (e.g., simulated radio or TV broadcast scripts of all kinds; excerpts from famous speeches, plays, narrative poems, novels, role-play skits and playlets, etc. …" (Morley, 1991, p. 509-510).

The *extemporaneous speech practice* follows the purpose of "… working toward integration of modified speech patterns into naturally occurring creative speech in both partially planned and unplanned talks (monologues)" (Morley, 1991, p. 510). The strategies selected to achieve such goals in extemporaneous speech practice, are regularly the following: formal and informal panel discussions in small groups, audience-interaction follow-up dialogue sessions in a question-and-answer format, audio or videotaped in-class presentations, out-of-class self-study rehearsals, preparation sessions with the teacher with audio or videotape and feedback sessions (Morley, 1991, p. 510).



Graphic 1. Three practice modes of pronunciation. Own work, based on Morley (1991, p. 509-510).

There are two approaches to train learners in pronunciation. *Perceptual training*, in which "the learner is asked to listen to and identify examples of the target sounds, and often also to judge between sounds which are phonetically quite similar" (Leather, 1981, p. 207). While in the case of *articulatory training*, "… the focus of attention is the configurations, postures and movements within the learner's vocal tract" (Leather, 1981, p. 207); being both approaches relevant in pronunciation instruction.

In brief, "it is clear that pronunciation can no longer be ignored" (Morley, 1991, p. 509). It is relevant to identify the main elements that may enhance or, in a negative aspect, interfere with the successful acquisition of phonological awareness. At that extend, intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication and oral interaction between individuals inserted in an English-speaking community; being a matter of cultural identity and possessing a positive impact in the relationships formed with others.

"The challenge to teachers and researchers is to develop an informed expertise directed toward facilitating learners' development of functional communicative speech/pronunciation patterns" (Morley, 1991, p. 509). Issue majorly interconnected with the global understanding of the concepts already stated: place of articulation, manner of articulation, intensity of articulation, intelligibility, learner goals, teacher role as a coach, and three kinds of speech practice; that compound the research work "Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) with Emphasis in Articulation, Pronunciation, and Intelligibility within the Urban Elementary School 154 «Tomás Escobedo». A Record on the Achievements of a Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused on the Usage of the Board Game Strategy in a Group of Fifth Grade, Elementary Level",

Fifth Grade, Elementary Level of Basic Education

The elementary or primary level of Basic Education, regulated by the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) in Mexico; contemplates the sixth different levels in which children or NNA (*niños, niñas y adolescentes*) from six (6) to twelve (12) years old, achieve the general objectives of the curricular and pedagogical instruction, being knowledgeable in subject matters such as *Lengua Materna. Español* (Mother Tongue. Spanish), *Lengua Extranjera. Inglés* (Foreign Language. English), *Matemáticas* (Math), *Conocimiento del Medio* o *Ciencias Naturales* (Natural Science), *Historia* (History), *Geografía* (Geography), *Formación Cívica y* Ética (Civics and Ethics), *Educación Física* (Physical Education), and *Artes* (Arts); apart from other optional subjects, dependent of institutional decisions, as *Computación* (Computing).

Fifth grade elementary learners integrate themselves in such educational level, being nine (9) or ten (10) years old. Considering that, it is relevant to identify the main *necessities and characteristics* that accompany *children* and learners those ages; since "young children, especially those up to the ages of nine or ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents and adults…" (Harmer, 2007, p. 82).

Once provided that information, it is plausible to mention that children up to the ages of nine and ten follow the ensuing learning patterns: 1. They provide a response to meaning in absence of individual word understanding. 2. They learn indirectly rather than directly; obtaining information from the generalities of the environment, rather than focusing on the precisions of the topic being taught. 3. They understand and achieve learning through the exposure of different stimuli that engage the totality of learning channels: visual, auditory, kinesthetic. 4. They identify abstractions as complex. 5. They display enthusiasm and curiosity about learning and comprehending their surroundings. 6. They possess a necessity of individual attention and approval of the professor. 7. They are able to dialogue about personal information, responding well to activities that focus on the learner. And finally, 8. They work under a limited attention span and may lose interest in a period comprehended for ten to fifteen minutes, unless strategies employed are extremely engaging. As Harmer dictates:

> Because children love discovering things, and because they respond well to being asked to use their imagination, they may well be involved in puzzle-like activities, in making things, in drawing things, in games, in physical movement or in songs. A good primary classroom mixes play and learning in an atmosphere of cheerful and supportive harmony (2007, p. 83).

Apart from that, a variety of theorists have provided referential basis to generate comprehension towards the stages that children reach while completing their development. "Piaget suggested that children start at the *sensori-motor stage*, and then proceed through the *intuitive stage* and the *concrete-operational stage* before finally reaching the *formal operational stage* where abstraction becomes increasingly possible" (Harmer, 2007, p. 82).

In his *Theory of the Cognitive Development* (1936), the Swedish psychologist Piaget affirmed the existence of a sequence of four stages marked by the acquisition of differing intellectual abilities and complex understanding about their surrounding environment; asseverating the absence of complex thinking forms that are correlated to the adult brain (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 27).

The *sensori-motor stage*, comprehending the birth through ages 18-24 months, corresponds to awareness of the immediate space, experimenting with the five senses through trial and error (Ansorge, 2020, WebMD). In this stage the child utilizes imitation as a mechanism to be inserted in the family nucleus; and conceives the *permanence of objects* establishing a relationship with its existence and absence while they are hidden (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 30).

The *intuitive stage* or *pre-operational stage*, from 2 to 7 years old, correlates with the gradual development of the language and the capacity to utilize symbolic forms of thinking. Children in that stage are capable to think logically in unidirectional operations. Nonetheless, it is observed high complexity while understanding and considering the particular point of view manifested by others (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 30).

The *concrete-operational stage*, from 7 to 11 years old, appears with the capacity of actively solving concrete problems, utilizing a logical manner of thinking. Children located in the previously mentioned stage are capable to comprehend the principle of *conservation* (material quantities do not change even if they are molded or transformed), classify and establish series, and understand reversibility (reverse a sequence of events to the original condition). The concrete-operational stage is the center of the present research work. (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 30).

To finish, the *formal operational stage*, from 11 years old to adulthood, consolidates the basis of adult thinking. The individual in this stage is capable to solve abstract problems in a logical manner, transforming the typology of thinking into a scientific one. In addition, the individual develops interest in sociological matters, as well as a necessity of creating a personal identity (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 30).

Stages of Cognitive Development, Jean Piaget		
Stage	Approximate Age	General Characteristics
The sensori-motor stage	Birth to 18-24 months (2 years old)	• Experiments with the five senses, trial-error. • Utilizes imitation. • Conceives the permanence of objects.
The intuitive stage or pre-operational stage	2-7 years old.	• Develops language ability gradually. • Thinks logically in unidirectional operations. • Finds complex the understanding of other points of view.
The concrete-operational stage	7-11 years old.	• Solves actively concrete problems. • Comprehends the principle of conservation. • Classify and establish series. • Understands the principle of reversibility.
The formal operational stage	From 11 years old to adulthood.	• Resolves abstract problems in a logical manner. • Thinks in a very scientific way. • Develops interest in sociological matters. • Creates a personal identity.

Table 2. Stages of Cognitive Development, Jean Piaget. Adapted from Woolfolk (2010, p. 30).

On the other hand, “Lev Vygotsky emphasized the place of social interaction in development and the role of a ‘knower’ providing ‘scaffolding’ to help a child who has entered to the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* where they are ready to learn new things” (Harmer, 2007, p. 82); establishing a bridge between *socialization* and the possible knowledge that will be acquired.

> It is important to get the level and balance of linguistic and cognitive challenge right for children… If activities are too easy, children will simply become bored, de-motivated and possibly disruptive. If activities are too difficult, children

are likely to become anxious, and also de-motivated and possibly disruptive (Read, 2007, p. 9).

Even considering the data provided, "all children are unique in what they bring to the classroom and in their ability to process information and learn through different facets of their Multiple Intelligences. They are also unique in their personal preferences and emerging learning styles" (Read, 2007, p. 7). It is crucial to consider the characteristics and necessities inside an elementary or primary level group; executing interconnections between the classroom reality and the theoretical references exposed above: Theory of the Cognitive Development (Piaget), and the Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky), in order to create successful learning sequences. The conceptualizations on *children* and *children learning* conceived are integrated in the research work "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level».

Game-Based Learning

"The use of puzzles and games in the second-language classroom have now become intrinsic components of many approaches, and the choice of many teachers, as formats for students to review and reinforce grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills…" (Danesi & Mollica, 1994, 345). Specifically, games have acquired high exposure in the educational field, as a result of the positive impact seen in the development of both, cognitive abilities and the reinforcement of a diversity of areas in the curriculum.

"*Game-based learning* refers to the use of games to encourage learning" (Mostowfi, Mamaghani & Khorramar, 2016, p. 5456). Game-based learning "… is not just designed for learner fun and enjoyment. It is also an instructional approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of instruction on student learning" (Kim et.al., 2018, p. 5). In brief, game-based learning enhances the Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (TESL, TEFL) process, in order to generate a positive result in the individual learning. "*Play* in the context of educational games should be defined as meaningful learning activities that promotes the formation of new concepts and the development of cognitive skills.

These meaningful learning activities are interactions designed with an aim…" (Tang, Hanneghan & El Rhalibi, 2009, p. 4).

The pedagogic advantages seen in the game-based learning approach are presented next: 1. Encourages learners to problem solving. 2. Increases understanding of a subject area while promoting formation of concepts. 3. Increases retention of information. 4. Aids cognitive abilities that are not formally taught in regular education. 5. Fosters collaborative learning in peer work. And 6. Builds confidence while participating (Tang, Hanneghan & El Rhalibi, 2009, p. 10). Additionally, "game-based learning can be used to supplement existing learning approaches or can be integrated into existing curricula" (Tang, Hanneghan & El Rhalibi, 2009, p. 10).

Board Game Strategy

Board games have been main topic of several scientific studies in the psychological area, covering cognitive aspects of the human being, asmemory, perception, decision making, problem solving, motivation, intelligence, and neuroscience (Gobet, De Voogt & Retschitzki, 2004; in Łodzikowski & Jekiel, 2019, p. 275). "In game studies, board games are games with rules, a playing surface, and tokens that enable interaction between or among players as players look down at the playing surface and face each other" (Bárbara, 2017; Zagal et. al., 2006; in Bayeck, 2020, p. 3). The conceptualization shown is conceived as applicable for the current research work, determining the advantages exposed ensuing.

A variety of study fields and settings have explored board games as instrumental in learning several educational subjects (Bayeck, 2020, p. 13-14). As a general matter, board games are useful in the comprehension of a diversity of educational contents: Language, Math, Science, Social Studies, History, Geography, among others. Considering that, "educational games, and board games in particular, are appropriate for the cognitive level of elementary school students" (Millians, 1999, in Mostowfi, Mamaghani & Khorramar, 2016, p. 5458); being the actual educational level where the research work is highlighted.

Apart from the contribution in learning specific contents, board gameplay enhances communication, socialization and relationship building among individuals with differing abilities (Barton et. al., 2018; Davis-Temple et. al., 2014; in

Bayeck, 2020, p. 14). Being involved in a board game, promotes oral participation and communicative exchange improvement, as one of the major necessities while Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (TESL, TEFL).

"The current data also show that board games can enable participation in diverse practices that are creative, fun, and engaging… Gameplay can motivate students to learn, and engage participants" (Carter et. a., 2014; in Bayeck, 2020, p. 14). The motivational aspect acquires high importance, considering characteristics in learning presented in young children, as the existence of a short attention span. Engaging strategies, such as the game board, may show a positive impact.

To conclude the advantages expressed, "board games are economically feasible, making their design and reproduction possible for independent game designers or researchers. Yet, in the digital era, board gamers have not only survived…" (Bayeck, 2020, p. 2), but being consolidated as an actual tool for both, pleasure and learning, as well as investigation. The research work "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation, and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level»; employs the principles of *game-based learning* and the *board game strategy*, in order to achieve the objectives of *articulation*, *pronunciation*, and *phonological awareness*.

Research Methodology

"Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic" (Wilkinson, 2000). Thus, this term encompasses the procedures selected to carry out an investigation, established as a "set of systematic, critical and empirical processes that are applied to the study of a phenomenon" (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010, p. 4), within the framework of a specific problem. Throughout this section, the methodological approach selected, the method, and the data collection procedures are described in chronological order.

Approach and Method

The design of the current research, "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level», is conceived under the qualitative paradigm; considering the main elements and characteristics implemented for its development. Being proved that "having an interest in knowing more about the field and in improving the practice of education leads to asking researchable questions, some of which are best approached through a qualitative research design" (Merriam, 1998, p. 1).

Qualitative research is established as an umbrella concept that conjugates inquiry forms that intent to achieve understanding of social phenomena with minor disruption of the natural setting, as possible (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). The qualitative spectrum acquires determined specifications. Amongst them, a flexible research process through the reconstruction of the reality and the actors involved; the convergence of investigator, participants, and other agents' perspectives, along with the analysis from an objective viewpoint (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010, p. 9). To put it differently, "qualitative inquiry… requires data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. Humans are best suited for this task, especially because interviewing, observing, and analyzing are activities central to qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 1-2).

[Qualitative research] is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting —what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting— and in the analysis to be able to communicate faithfully to others who are interested in that setting… The analysis strives for depth of understanding (Patton, 1985, p. 1; in Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

The study pretends, as exposed by Patton, to achieve general understanding of a game-based learning proposal focused in the usage of the board game strategy in a group of fifth grade, elementary level, considering the necessity to observe the results obtained in the areas of articulation, pronunciation, and intelligibility in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); analyzing the setting described, as well as the effectiveness of the methodology and strategies proposed. Being intended to obtain a richly descriptive processual work (Merriam, 1998, p. 8).

Particularly, the research work is determined as a *basic* or *generic qualitative study* (Merriam, 1998, p. 11).; anticipating the inclusion of the exemplified characteristics discussed above. "The basic qualitative study in education typically draws from concepts, models, and theories in educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and sociology. Data are collected through interview, observations, or document analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). *Per se*, the consolidation of the study is based on data gathering and analysis; being the researcher the primary instrument to guarantee its obtainment (Merriam, 1998, p. 7).

Techniques and Instruments

"Data collection (is) a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research question… A qualitative researcher engages in a series of activities in the process of collecting data" (Creswell, 2013, p. 146). Data collection activities are considered as it follows: 1. Locating the site or the individual, 2. Gaining access and making rapport, 3. Purposely sampling, 4. Collecting data, 5. Recording information, 6. Resolving field issues, and 7. Storing data (Creswell, 2013, p. 146)

To define the techniques and instruments considered to the execution of the investigation "Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation, and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused on the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level»; it is accurate to mention that qualitative studies follow the theoretical principles established by the areas of educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and sociology. As a result, observation, document analysis, and audiovisual materials are pertinent.

To commence, the *observation* technique "… is one the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research. It is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes" (Angrosino, 2007; in Creswell, 2013, p. 166). Observation is the technique selected to achieve the aims of the study, registering the activities and situations detected in the research site, also known as *field notes*. Observation will be performed in the modality of *participant*; meaning the execution of activities as a professor, and the development of the proposal. Namely, “the researcher is fully engaged with the people he or she is observing. This may help him or her to establish greater rapport with the people being observed (Angrosino, 2007; in Cresswell, 2013, p. 166).

Audiovisual materials, being understood as elements gathered to its observation and listening, will function in a practical manner while consolidating the current research work. *Photography* was selected, in order to serve the purpose of recreating graphically the scenarios in which the professor-researcher is exposed; besides documenting the implemented strategies. *Sound* or *audio* collection, by its part, was conceived accurate in terms of evaluating the areas of articulation, pronunciation, and phonological awareness; being its objective the consolidation of the phonetic transcriptions from the participants selected.

The major instrument to collect relevant data is determined as the *Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability*; being an adaptation from Morley (1991, p. 502). Such instrument facilitates the identification of general characteristics during the execution of oral linguistic exchanges. The Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability is modified, being consolidated as a rubric that monitors the achievement of three communicative thresholds: *Communicative Threshold A* (first and second level), *Communicative Threshold B* (third and fourth level), and *Communicative Threshold C* (fifth and sixth level). Each corresponding to the ensuing levels: 1) unintelligibility in speech, 2) largely unintelligible speech, 3) reasonably intelligible speech, 4) largely intelligible speech, 5) fully intelligible speech, and 6) “near-native” speech. Its utilization guarantees the effectiveness of the board game and game-based learning application in a tangible manner.

To conclude the list of techniques and instruments utilized to develop the research work, *documents* shall be mentioned. The concept, being referred to the original productions of the students, asked to be performed in a blank or square notebook, will also be taken into consideration to prove the execution of the activities; as well as identifying possible interference.

Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability				
Communicative Threshold	Linguistic Level	Description	Yes	No
Communicative Threshold A	1	Speech is basically unintelligible; only an occasional word/phrase can be recognized.		
	2	Speech is largely unintelligible; great listener effort is required; constant repetitions and verifications are required.		
Communicative Threshold B	3	Speech is reasonably intelligible, but significant listener effort is required due to speaker's pronunciation/ grammatical error which impede communication and cause listener distraction; ongoing need for repetitions and verifications.		
	4	Speech is largely intelligible; while sound and prosodic variances from NS norm are obvious, listeners can understand if they concentrate on the message.		
Communicative Threshold C	5	Speech is fully intelligible; occasional sound and prosodic variances from NS norm are present but not seriously distracting to listener.		
	6	Speech is "near-native"; only minimal features of divergence from NS can be detected; near native sound and prosodic patterning.		

Table 3. Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability. Rubric Adaptation from Morley (1991, p. 502).

Process, data analysis and results

Pronunciation is a central aspect of communication that should be perceived as a basic and value-added factor in social, academic, and professional contexts (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 22). Considering the absence of regularity in the orthographical system of English, as established by Radford et. al. (2009, p. 27), the acquisition of a “perfect pronunciation”, or near-native pronunciation is not a requisite. On the contrary, *intelligible pronunciation* is essential in communicative exchanges. Specifically, learner goals are established by Morley (1991, p. 500): *Goal 1. Functional Intelligibility*, *Goal 2. Functional Communicability*, *Goal 3. Increased self-confidence*, and *Goal 4. Speech monitoring abilities and modification strategies beyond the classroom.*

To achieve the objectives exposed, the teacher must be a *pronunciation/speech coach* while supplying information, giving models, offering suggestions and constructive feedback, and providing encouraging practice opportunities (Morley, 1991, P. 507); as well as incorporating effective strategies, such as the *board game*, that can be a memory-enhancing manner to develop pronunciation and linguistic concepts (Łodzikowski, 2019, p. 275). In addition, considering the *three practice modes*. In consonance, Leather (1981, p. 207-208), suggests the existence of two approaches to train pronunciation in learners: *perceptual training* and *articulatory training.* The former allows the discrimination between sounds that are phonetically similar. The latter focuses the attention on the postures or movements of the speech apparatus.

The experimental methodology designed, under the principles of the *game-based learning approach*, attempts to achieve *functional intelligibility*, being the first learner goal in terms of *pronunciation*. The execution of the proposal will consider the application of two of the *three practice modes: imitative speaking practice* and *rehearsed speaking practice*, as well as a *board game*, following the *perceptual-articulatory training approach*. The phonemes selected were the *voiceless alveolar fricative* /s/ and the *voiceless postalveolar fricative* /ʃ/**.** A general view on the sequence developed is shown next:

Stage 1: Phoneme Recognition (Articulatory Training)

- Learners observe both images and identify the correct positioning of the speech apparatus to produce an intelligible pronunciation of **/s/** (snake sound) and **/ʃ/** (silence sound).

Stage 2: Imitative Speaking Practice (Perceptual Training)

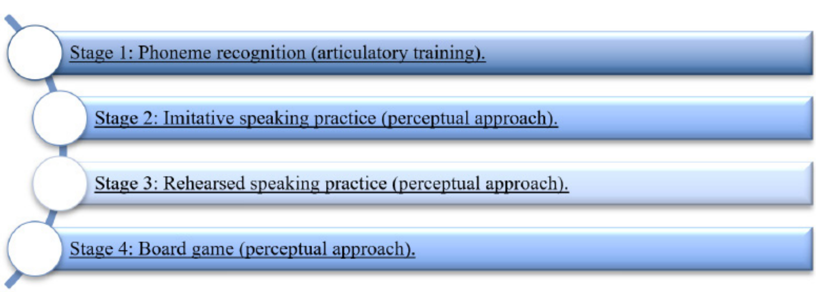
- Learners find the Easter eggs hidden throughout the institution, identifying the label hidden. The word will be recognized by students inside the group with the corresponding illustrations, imitating the phonemes under a controlled production. Students decide if the word corresponds to **/s/** or **/ʃ/**.

Stage 3: Rehearsed Speaking Practice (Perceptual Approach)

- Learners read the **/s/** and **/ʃ/** tongue twister, identifying the words corresponding to **/s/** and **/ʃ/.** They highlight with red the former and green the latter. Students read aloud to identify the possible variations or inaccuracies.

Stage 4: Board Game (Perceptual Approach)

- Students participate in the board game strategy, advancing through the boxes while rolling a dice, and repeating aloud the word obtained with the proper pronunciation. The board game is compound by a series of images containing the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/, in which the learner has to move forward, aspiring to win. Bonus and losing boxes appear.



Graphic 2. Pronunciation of the /s/ and /ʃ/. Experimental methodology proposal.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental methodology applied, three learners were selected. The criteria of selection considered is the ensuing: (a) the satisfactorily consolidation of the four stadiums: Stage 1: Phoneme Recognition (Articulatory Training), Stage 2: Imitative Speaking Practice (Perceptual Training), Stage 3: Rehearsed Speaking Practice (Perceptual Approach), and Stage 4: Board Game (Perceptual Approach); and (b) the achievement of an advanced, medium, or low-level evidence.

Considering the level in which learners where positioned (A1 according to the CEFR, beginners); articulation and pronunciation areas showed a percentage of advances. Intelligibility also manifested positive effects, being particularly benefitted the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/. The affirmations previously stated derive from the analysis of both, the rehearsed speaking practice, as well as the participation in the board game strategy.

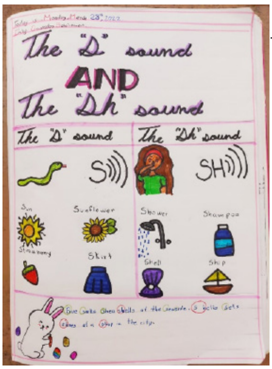
Each learner obtained a determined level, considering *The Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability, Rubric Adaptation* (Morley, 1991, p. 502); being a reference of the adequacy in their linguistic exchanges inside oral communication, as well as identifying the general characteristics in expression and orality from the participants. The data obtained is established as it follows:

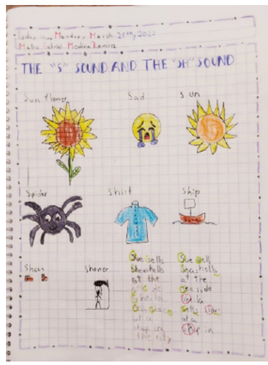
In the first case, *student 1* developed an *adequate articulation* of the voiceless alveolar fricative, collocating the blade of the tongue against the alveolar ridge behind the teeth; as well, demonstrated consciousness of the speech apparatus usage, while articulating the voiceless postalveolar fricative, channeling air flow along the back of the tongue up to the place of articulation, being focused against the nearly clenched teeth, and generating high-frequency turbulence. Student 1 was collocated at *Communicative Threshold C*, *sixth level*; being established as "*near-native" speech*, considering the null appearance of divergent features, prosodic patterns similar to native speakers; and virtually nonexistent accent.

The second case refers to *student 2*, which manifested *partially adequate articulation* of the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless postalveolar fricative sounds. Divergence in both phonological features was identified, demonstrating medium consciousness in the speech apparatus usage. In order to articulate the voiceless alveolar fricative, the learner channeled air flow along the back of the tongue up to the place of articulation, being focused against the nearly clenched teeth, and generating high frequency turbulence, which corresponds to the voiceless postalveolar fricative sound. In example, the word *seashell* was pronounced as follows: ˈʃiˌʃɛlz, instead of ˈsiˌʃɛlz. Student 2 was determined at *Communicative Threshold B, fourth level*; being *largely intelligible speech*, with sound and prosodic variances that can be understood if listeners concentrate on the message; and accent as the beginning of interference at distraction level on the novelty of the speech pattern.

The ultimate case, *student 3*, executed a *non-adequate articulation* around both phonological features, showing lack of consciousness in the speech apparatus usage. The voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless postalveolar fricative sounds were switched vastly. Notwithstanding, confusion with phonemes possessing similar characteristics (as with /z/ or /ʧ/) was totally avoided. Student 3 obtained the *Communicative Threshold A*, *second level*; namely, considered as *largely unintelligible speech*, in which great listener effort is required in terms of constant repetitions and verification; being accent the causative of severe interference in oral communication.

Inaccuracies were observed in medium and low-level evidences, since developing pronunciation is a gradual process that accumulates an L2 database from L1 to transitional interlanguage (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 71). It is plausible to identify advances in student 1, student 2, and student 3; starting with the general identification of the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless postalveolar fricative sounds; omitting the confusion between other phonemes with similar characteristics of collocation in the speech apparatus. Consolidation of both phonemes is still in process, demonstrating serious improvements in contrast with initial data provided. The table below shows deeper information of the phonological route followed by each learner: student 1, student 2, and student 3; reaffirming the beneficial effects of the utilization of the game-based learning methodology, and the board game strategy in the areas of articulation, pronunciation and intelligibility at elementary level.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Evidences and Observation Generated after the Application of the research work “Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level”</th></tr>
<tr><th>Student 1. Advanced-level Evidence.</th><th>Student 2: Medium-level Evidence.</th><th>Student 3: Low-level Evidence.</th></tr>
<tr><td>

Advanced-level evidence.</td><td>

Medium-level evidence.</td><td>
Low-level evidence.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Communicative Threshold C, sixth level. “Near-native” speech. Identification of /s/ and /ʃ/. Intelligibility while producing both phonemes in the phonetic sequence.
Phonetic transcription of the audio:
su sɛlz ˈsiˌʃɛlz æt ðə ˈsiˌsaɪd. ˈʃilə sɛlz ʃuz æt ə ʃɑp ɪn ðə ˈsɪti.</td><td>Communicative Threshold B, fourth level. Largely intelligible speech. Identification of some /s/ and /ʃ/. Intelligibility while producing the phonemes, except in words containing both. Example: seashell.
Phonetic transcription of the audio:
su sɛlz ˈʃiˌʃɛlz æt ðə ˈsiˌsaɪd. ˈʃilə sɛlz ʃuz æt ə ʃɑp ɪn ðə ˈsɪti.</td><td>Communicative Threshold A, second level. Largely unintelligible speech. Confusion of /s/ and /ʃ/ in the vast majority of the elements. Example: shells instead of sells.
Phonetic transcription of the audio:
su ʃɛlz ˈʃiˌsɛlz æt ðə ˈʃiˌsaɪd. ˈʃilə ʃɛlz ʃuz æt ə ʃɑp ɪn ðə ˈsɪti.</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4. Advanced, medium, and low level evidences analyzed. Own work.

Conclusions

The implementation of the experimental research was generally successful. In the consecutive paragraphs, findings, achievements, limitations, and future studies are exposed. The *main finding* identified was the high necessity of focusing on the pronunciation area; since most communicative curriculums and syllabuses perform overgeneralizations and take it as granted (*Nuevo Modelo Educativo, 2017*), being the supposed result of teaching the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The analysis of both, theoretical references and the research practice, demonstrated that pronunciation is a TEFL area that requires attention and instruction, in order to achieve the linguistic objectives towards English.

A *second finding* is the pertinence and relevance of including the game-based learning approach and ludic strategies, such as the board game; aiming to emphasize articulation, pronunciation and intelligibility. Both serve the purpose of guiding the natural cognitive developmental process, characteristics, and necessities of children from nine (9) to ten (10) years old, involved in fifth grade of elementary level. Pronunciation teaching has a strong dependency on motivational factors. While including game-based activities in the elementary level classroom, it is noncomplex to achieve the predetermined curricular goals.

The usage of the board game strategy is also beneficial as a memory-enhancing material to develop pronunciation and linguistic concepts. Specifically, beginners are recognized as benefitted; being not just a didactic tool easy to obtain, but a traditional and valid educational game that promotes the successful consecution of the learning process, accompanied with other regular activities and approaches.

The *third finding* relies on the stigmatization of the Basic Education System, particularly at primary or elementary level. Learners can be adequately inserted in regular English courses and sessions. Notwithstanding, the lack of education professionals in such level increases the stigma over the public sector and the incapacity of children to become English regular users. Children from any age, in the elemental education, can develop the needed capacities to use the English linguistic system, even in presence of a higher student number and less physical or material facilities.

As the *primary achievement*, the acquisition of functional intelligibility was possible, in particular with the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/. While teaching pronunciation, the objective is the development of functional intelligibility, omitting a native-like accent. The incorporation of the three modes of practice (imitative speaking practice rehearsed speaking practice, and extemporaneous speech practice) in the pronunciation syllabus served the purpose of providing a range of activities, covering the four linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the perceptual-articulatory training approach is considered advantageous, enabling the discrimination between sounds, and the articulation of the speech apparatus. Apart from the expressed, a *second achievement* is the verification of The Speech Intelligibility Index: Evaluation of Student Communicability (Morley, 1991, p. 502); being a reference of the adequacy in the linguistic exchanges inside oral communication.

Limitations are conceived in terms of application. The experimental proposal, designed, implemented, and evaluated in merely one session, could offer limited information related to the processes involved in the research. Being conscious about that, a plausible action should be directed to the execution of an extended curricular design or pedagogic sequence.

Regards the previous information, a *future study* or *emergent plan* considered as necessary and applicable could be the consolidation of an action research study, following the pattern and objectives of the investigation already exposed. The elements proposed, as a manner of spiral cycles for its observation, analysis, evaluation, and improvement; may provide better understating in terms of the effectiveness acquired. Even more, the progression could include a diversity of phonemes in the English language; or add a variation with the major complex phonological issues related to non-native speakers of the language, whose mother tongue is Spanish. The validity of the research work should possibly be increased with the incorporation of study subjects in variable levels and groups; rather in elementary, lower or higher educational levels. "*Teaching English Articulation, Pronunciation and Intelligibility. A Game-Based Learning Proposal Focused in the Board Game Strategy, Elementary Level*" was conceived as a purposeful study with a wide range of possibilities to explore in future occasions.

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Annexed Material Evidence

Illustration 1. Voiceless alveolar fricative.

Illustration 2. Voiceless postalveolar fricative.

Illustration 3. Voiceless alveolar fricative: snake sound.

Illustration 4. Voiceless postalveolar fricative: silence sound.

shake	shovel	sheep	shampoo
shark	shell	shop	shoulder
sheriff	shrimp	shirt	ship
shoes	shower	show	shorter
soup	salt	seal	spider
snowman	snail	sun	skirt
sad	sick	sunflower	seahorse
saw	socks	strawberry	snowflake

Illustration 5. Words with phonemes /s/ and /ʃ/ (labels for Easter)

Illustration 6. Flashcards of phonemes /s/ and /ʃ/.

Illustration 7. Board game of phonemes /s/ and /ʃ/.

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Teaching today must be understood as a process that influences and is influenced by personal, social, and cultural aspects. Thus, quality in the teaching-learning process consists of reinforcing the commitment between the social and educational contexts (Fernández Batanero, 2004). In the specific case of teaching English as a foreign language in Mexico, Rueda & Wilburn (2015) argue that it is necessary even from the third grade of preschool. This need has led to the Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (National Program for English in Basic Education [PNIEB]) (SEP, 2009) to being part of the curriculum development area for more than a decade now. The primary goal of this program is for the learner to carry out pragmatic, cultural, and sociolinguistic practices that satisfy communicative needs and create awareness of otherness. Certainly, the fact of living in a globalized world promotes internationalization in the fields of education, economy, medicine, technology, etc. Therefore, the teaching of English in Mexico seeks to develop individuals capable of carrying out the aforementioned practices and to develop this awareness of the existence of other languages and cultures.

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