

HOW

A Colombian Journal for English-language Teachers

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HOW

A Colombian Journal for English-language Teachers

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On Transformation in the ELT Community: Words from the President of ASOCOPI

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On Transformation in the ELT Community: Words from the President of ASOCOPI

Transformation is the result of a collective commitment of individuals rather than a single effort to move things forward. If ASOCOPI is “*you, me, and all of us*” then transformation is not something we initiate but something we inevitably inhabit. We understand transformation as an ongoing process through which an academic community remains open to listening, learning, unlearning, relearning, and co-constructing knowledges. Thus, ASOCOPI has been a space of belonging, resistance, and hope; not only of inclusion, but of epistemic justice.

To begin with, the ways we name ourselves also reflect this ongoing process. In this sense, we have come to understand ourselves as *English-language teachers*. For this Association, the connotation of this term does not seek to replace previous understandings, but rather to expand them, allowing for more inclusive and nuanced ways of engaging with language, identity, and pedagogy. As the Colombian Association of English-language Teachers (ASOCOPI), we aim to serve as a forum that fosters professional collaboration, promotes high academic standards, and encourages the exchange of ideas and resources within the ELT community. In this regard, a *Statutory Reform* took place last year, through which six areas of action were approved by the General Assembly to promote inclusive participation and equitable access to knowledges. These areas are: a) Education; b) Culture; c) Science, Technology, and Innovation; d) Social Development; e) Support for Nonprofit Organizations; and f) Support for Educational Initiatives and Entrepreneurship.

Rather than representing a mere structural adjustment, this reform was understood as part of the ongoing transformation of ASOCOPI, as it opened new possibilities for how we come to be understood and to position our academic identity within and beyond our community. In this sense, these areas do not work as isolated domains, but as interconnected spaces through which ASOCOPI continues cultivating, supporting and treasuring the ELT profession in Colombia.

Regarding *Education*, this transformation is also evident in the expansion of professional opportunities we offered throughout the year at ASOCOPI, which included webinars, express workshops, and diploma courses. These opportunities moved beyond isolated events and pointed toward a more sustained and accessible model of engagement, where continuous learning became a shared and ongoing process within the ELT community. Equally significant is the diversification of the perspectives addressed within these academic spaces such as cultural identity, masculinities, queer literacies, contextualized materials, socioemotional learning, among others. This reflected a transformation toward more critical, situated, and socially responsive approaches to English language teaching. Thus, knowledges were not only transmitted, but collectively co-constructed.

The 60th ASOCOPI Annual and 6th International Conference, held in Santa Marta, further illustrated this transformation through the diversity of its participants, and with a total of 113 presentations. The presence of English-language teachers from 15 departments of Colombia (Antioquia, Atlántico, Bogotá D.C., Boyacá, Caquetá, Caldas, Casanare, Córdoba, Huila, Magdalena, Nariño, Quindío, Santander, Valle del Cauca, and Cauca) and 7 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada,

Chile, the United States, the Philippines, and Japan) around the world pointed to a more inclusive and representative academic community.

We also had the honor of welcoming international plenary speakers, including *Veronico N. Tarrayo*, Ph.D., from the Philippines, and *Marjorie Campo Ringle*, Ph.D., from the United States, alongside the participation of Colombian plenary speakers *José Vicente Abad Olaya*, Ph.D., *Astrid Núñez-Pardo*, Ph.D., *Isabel Tejada Sánchez*, Ph.D., and *David Alfonso Suaza Cardozo*, a school teacher from Garzón, Huila. An academic community grounded in dialogue does not remain static; it evolves, expands, and, in doing so, transforms.

Transformation is not possible without the support of our sponsors, who have placed their trust in us: *HP, World YMCA, YMCA, the British Council, Intrax Education, Lingo Quest, Wisdom, and National Geographic Learning*. Although we valued their financial assistance, their support reflected a shared commitment to strengthening English language education and fostering spaces where knowledges can circulate more broadly and equitably.

ASOCOPI also expanded the circulation of knowledges beyond formal presentations and traditional academic formats. This year, we included some interviews as part of the conference experience which allowed more personal, situated, and accessible exchanges, where diverse voices and experiences were acknowledged and valued. In this way, interviews became not only a means of documentation, but also a dialogic practice that humanized academic work and strengthened the sense of community that characterizes our Association.

During the celebration of ASOCOPI's 60th anniversary, we counted on the presence of former ASOCOPI presidents, including *Ricardo Romero-Medina* (1995; 2003–2005), *Rigoberto Castillo* (2006), *Melba Libia Cárdenas-Beltrán* (2007–2010), *Álvaro Hernán Quintero-Polo* (2011–2012), *Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto* (2013–2016), *Harold Castañeda-Peña* (2017–2018), *Carlo Granados Beltrán* (2019–2020), *Jairo Enrique Castañeda-Trujillo* (2021–2022), and *Claudia María Uribe-Hoyos* (2023–2024), whose leadership has been fundamental in shaping the Association across time. Additionally, we honored *Harold Castañeda-Peña*, Ph.D., with the ASOCOPI 2025 Clare de Silva Award, in recognition of his outstanding trajectory and sustained contributions to English language teacher education, research, and academic leadership in Colombia and beyond.

The participation of ASOCOPI in cultural events and academic activities across different territories of the country further broaden this transformation. Last year, we had the honor of being invited to various educational institutions, as well as to the Embassy of Canada in Colombia and the Embassy of the United States in Colombia, where the Association extended its presence beyond formal academic settings. In addition, we were honored to participate in the 2025 Global English Education China Assembly in Beijing, where a Memorandum of Understanding was signed.

In relation to *Science, Technology and Innovation*, we were honored to receive support from *Hewlett-Packard Colombia, World YMCA, and YMCA Colombia* for printing the Special Issue of *HOW Journal*, which contributed to expanding access to teachers' voices and fostering a broader circulation of knowledge within our academic community. Transformation was further enriched by *Harold Johan Ortigón Reyes*, whose creative contribution visually embodies the spirit and cover of this publication. Additionally, this process was accompanied by the renewal of *HOW Journal's* logo, a move that not

only reconfigures its visual identity but also reinforces its commitment to counting on a biannual, free, open-access publication for diverse voices, both national and international, in the field of ELT.

In the same spirit, this is an opportunity to extend our gratitude to *Edgar Lucero-Babatina*, who served since September 4th, 2018, as HOW Journal's Editor; and *José David Largo-Rodríguez*, who joined on September 5th, 2019, as HOW Journal's Assistant to the Editor. Although they are no longer part of the team, their dedication and long-standing commitment have consolidated the journal's trajectory and impact, leaving a lasting mark on its development. As part of this ongoing collective transformation, this is also an opportunity to welcome *Silvia Lucia Molina-Higuera*, new HOW Journal's Editor, and *Elianna María Serna Corrales*, HOW Journal's Assistant to the Editor. We trust that their knowledges will continue opening new paths for dialogue within an academic community that is committed to understanding and engaging with differences.

In terms of *Social Development*, ASOCOPI has knocked on several doors to establish alliances, seek funding, and identify opportunities that enable us to design and implement initiatives aligned at strengthening the quality of education in vulnerable communities. At present, we have held meetings to consolidate efforts with programs, with the purpose of co-constructing projects that respond to local needs and contribute to more equitable access to educational opportunities.

Within the scope of *Support for Non-Profit Organizations*, ASOCOPI has engaged in conversations with other non-profit entities to provide academic, pedagogical, and logistical support for various initiatives, as well as to develop educational projects related to English language teaching. Particularly, a collaborative partnership has been established with the YMCA Colombia through which both organizations have joined efforts to strengthen teacher education, promote English language learning, and contribute to social transformation.

In the last area, *Support for Educational Initiatives and Entrepreneurship*, ASOCOPI launched this new area of action by supporting four English-language teachers with their entrepreneurship during the 60th National and 6th International ASOCOPI Conference in Santa Marta. This support included a fully sponsored stand, allowing not only their knowledges and work to be shared with the academic community, but also giving visibility to teacher-led projects that contribute to strengthening ASOCOPI's mission.

In line with these efforts, ASOCOPI has also strengthened its presence in digital spaces, recognizing the role of social media in expanding the reach of the Association and fostering greater engagement with the ELT community. Through platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, ASOCOPI has shared webinars, conference sessions, and academic content, creating more accessible spaces for keeping in touch with diverse knowledges. This growing digital presence not only reflects the Association's commitment to visibility and communication but also contributes to co-constructing a more connected and participatory academic community. Similarly, we have taken steps to strengthen ASOCOPI's sustainability and operational capacity. Last year, we established an institutional mobile line exclusively for ASOCOPI, enhancing communication and supporting the coordination of its activities.

In the same way, ASOCOPI benefited from the support of nine interns, whose contributions were essential to the Association. Three of them (*Juana Sofía Rodríguez Reina*, *María Camila Suaiza Acevedo*, and *Melissa Liney Vega Sotomonte*) joined during the first semester of the year, while the remaining

six contributed during the second semester. Of these, four supported ASOCOPI's administrative processes (*Juana Botero Cárdenas, Nicolás Candia Roa, Karen Niño Rodríguez, and Camilo Rojas Castellanos*), and two contributed to the work of the HOW Journal (*Eliana Serna Corrales and Emigdio Cáceres Acero*).

As part of this collective transformation, we would also like to recognize the invaluable work of *Miryam Cristina Vera Peña*, ASOCOPI's Administrative Manager, whose leadership, dedication support and commitment were fundamental to the Association, accompanying much of the administrative work that took place behind the scenes.

All in all, last year was marked by collective efforts, meaningful collaborations, and a shared commitment to strengthening our academic community through transformation. As we move forward, we remain committed to fostering more inclusive, connected, and context-responsive practices that continue to shape the future of English language teaching in Colombia. Thank you for believing in us and for continuing to co-construct an academic community grounded in dialogue, belonging, and epistemic justice.

To conclude, the upcoming 61st ASOCOPI Annual and 7th International Conference, to be held Universidad Industrial de Santander in Bucaramanga from October 1st to 3rd, 2026, offers a renewed opportunity to keep on learning from each other. On behalf of the National Board of Directors, we would like to invite our academic community to continue sharing experiences and co-constructing knowledges that respond to the diverse realities of English language teaching in Colombia. We are looking forward to coming together in dialogue and continuing to weave knowledges across our diverse contexts.

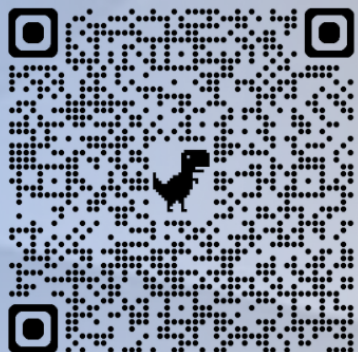


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Editorial 2026-1: Welcoming Time

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Editorial 2026-1: Welcoming Time

The Colombian Association of English-language Teachers - ASOCOPI, recognized for its sustained commitment to strengthening research and scientific development in English language teaching and learning, presents to the academic community a new issue of HOW Journal. This volume also marks the beginning of a new editorial team, as the responsibility for leading the journal is now assumed by Professor *Silvia Lucía Molina-Higuera* as HOW's Editor, accompanied by *Elianna María Serna-Correales* as HOW's Assistant to the Editor, under the leadership of President of ASOCOPI, Professor *Jhonatan Vásquez-Guarnizo* and the National Board of Directors.

In this issue, HOW Journal respectfully acknowledges the work carried out by Professor *Edgar Lucero-Babativa*, HOW's Editor since 2018, and Professor *José David Largo-Rodríguez*, HOW's Assistant to the Editor since 2019. They both contributed to maintaining the academic rigor, editorial quality, and trajectory of the journal. This issue represents both the culmination of a process carefully advanced by the outgoing editorial team and the beginning of a new stage that will continue the work of previous teams in fostering research trends and scholarly interests of English-language teachers.

In this context, it is important to highlight that ELT research in Colombia, and the interest of some Latin-American teachers, involves not only the teaching and learning of English as a language but also its sociocultural, political, and technological dimensions. The contributions included in this issue move beyond monolingual and standardized approaches toward more inclusive, reflective, and contextualized pedagogical frameworks. Together, they invite readers to rethink English language teaching in relation to the human beings who experience it, their realities, and their position within society.

In line with these discussions, *López Urbina* and *Bonilla Mora* analyze contra-hegemonic practices in language education in Colombia, advocating for pedagogical shifts grounded in translanguaging and the ecology of languages. By validating indigenous and minority languages, their study positions multilingualism as both a sociocultural and political stance that promotes inclusion, preserves linguistic heritage, and challenges monolingual paradigms. The authors argue for foreign language policies grounded in local knowledge - strengthened rather than replaced by international perspectives - highlighting the cognitive and societal benefits of sustaining linguistic diversity.

In this line of thought, recognizing feelings, perspectives, and lived experiences becomes essential to understanding how individuals interpret and assume educational principles in diverse ways. Within this research field, *Zapata-Arias*, *Valencia-Gómez*, and *Calderón-Vargas* explore how critical perspectives are enacted within teacher education programs. Their findings reveal the complexity of balancing solid linguistic proficiency with the development of critical awareness. The study emphasizes the need for negotiation between teacher educators and pre-service teachers, proposing that language as a system and language as ideology must be integrated rather than treated as isolated components. In doing so, teacher education can foster reflexive practitioners capable of questioning power dynamics while achieving high levels of proficiency.

Considering the importance of the teacher's role in society and in the formation of future citizens, *Castañeda-Londoño* presents a pedagogical experience grounded in place, inquiry, and community-based approaches. Conceptualizing places as socially constructed texts, her study extends learning beyond classroom boundaries, fostering higher-order thinking, autonomy, and social awareness. Students demonstrated stronger conceptual connections, greater confidence in English use, and more informed decision-making in their projects. The study highlights the teacher's role as a reflexive and compassionate guide, showing how learning through inquiry can cultivate transformative experiences and a deeper sensitivity among students toward the communities around them.

In this regard, technologies have increasingly emerged as mediating tools not only in communication and business but across all human spheres where education plays a central role. In this field, *Lagos-Monsalve* and *Cisterna-Zenteno* investigate the integration of Instagram to enhance EFL writing engagement. Their findings indicate improvements across affective, cognitive, behavioral, and social dimensions, alongside noticeable improvements in writing performance. By providing an authentic space for self-expression, Instagram reduced anxiety, strengthened the sense of classroom community, and encouraged extended writing practices, illustrating the pedagogical potential of socially situated digital environments.

Additionally, *Murcia* and *Jaramillo-Calderón* present a systematic review of AI-driven Natural Language Processing –NLP– tools in language education between 2015 to 2023, outlining their applications in personalized feedback, automated assessment, and literacy development. While these technologies offer promising opportunities for accessibility and instructional innovation, the review foregrounds critical concerns related to academic integrity, data privacy, inequality, and the limitations of automated evaluation. The authors call for stronger collaboration between educators and AI developers, the advancement of digital literacies, and the development of theoretical and policy frameworks to ensure ethical and responsible integration.

Finally, reflecting on educational policies as guiding frameworks for English language teaching in Colombia becomes essential. Policies provide direction and coherence; however, they should not prevent critical examination or transformation. Understanding and questioning policy discourses is part of being an active member of society.

In this vein, *Arias-Alzate*, *Perdomo-Santacruz*, and *Valencia-Giraldo* critically examine bilingualism discourses in local policies in Quindío through Critical Discourse Analysis. Their findings reveal a persistent conflation of bilingualism with English learning, reflecting processes of commodification and monoglossic ideology. While English is positioned as an economic asset, emerging local initiatives suggest alternative multilingual perspectives that could support bottom-up, context-sensitive policy development.

Taken together, the contributions included in this issue point toward the need to continue reexamining English language teaching through lenses informed by research, technology, community engagement, and critical perspectives that respond to the demands of contemporary multilingual and multicultural educational contexts.

With this new issue, *HOW* reaffirms the commitment of ASOCOPI to the dissemination of scientific knowledge and to the continued strengthening of educational research. More importantly, it

invites English-language teachers and researchers to engage critically with the ideas presented here and to situate their own practices within the broader sociocultural, technological, and political conversations shaping the profession, recognizing that teaching English goes beyond linguistic proficiency and involves the formation of reflective, sensitive, and socially responsible individuals.

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Contra-Hegemonic Language Teaching in Colombia: Embracing Translanguaging and the Ecology of Languages Reflections

Enseñanza de Lenguas Contra-Hegemónica en Colombia: Reflexiones en torno al Translanguaging y la Ecología de las Lenguas

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Abstract

This reflective article explores the implications of contra-hegemonic practices in language education in Colombia, highlighting some misalignment with the country's multicultural and multilingual realities. Throughout the text, authors advocate for a shift from monolingual and standardized methodologies to alternative and inclusive approaches grounded in the translanguaging and the ecology of languages frameworks. The reflection emphasizes the importance of bottom-up educational strategies that empower teachers and students to confront dominant linguistic forms and advocate for preserving minority and marginalized languages. This is essential in classrooms and multilingual contexts where both foreign and native languages coexist. By embracing the ecology of languages, the authors underscore the interconnectedness of languages, considering social, psychological, political, and environmental factors that translanguaging considers essential for a dynamic pedagogical process. Ultimately, this perspective envisions a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable educational paradigm that connects local and global knowledge.

Keywords: ecology of languages, language teaching, linguistic diversity, multilingualism, translanguaging.

Resumen

Este artículo reflexivo explora las implicaciones de las prácticas contrahegemónicas en la enseñanza de lenguas en Colombia, destacando algunas desarticulaciones que se presentan con relación a las realidades multiculturales y multilingües del país. A lo largo del texto, los autores abogan por un cambio de las metodologías monolingües y estandarizadas a enfoques alternativos e inclusivos basados en los marcos de trabajo del translenguaje y la ecología de las lenguas. La reflexión enfatiza la importancia de las estrategias educativas de abajo hacia arriba que empoderen a los maestros y estudiantes para enfrentar las formas lingüísticas dominantes y abogar por la preservación de las lenguas minoritarias y marginadas. Esto es esencial en las aulas y los contextos multilingües donde coexisten tanto las lenguas extranjeras como las nativas. Al adoptar la ecología de las lenguas, los autores subrayan la interconexión de las lenguas, teniendo en cuenta los factores sociales, psicológicos, políticos y ambientales que el translenguaje considera esenciales para un proceso pedagógico dinámico. En última instancia, esta perspectiva avizora un paradigma educativo más inclusivo, equitativo y sostenible que conecta el conocimiento local y global.

Palabras clave: diversidad lingüística, ecología de las lenguas, enseñanza de lenguas, multilingüismo, translanguaje.

Résumé

Cet article réflexif examine les implications des pratiques contre-hégémoniques dans l'enseignement des langues en Colombie, en mettant en évidence certains décalages par rapport aux réalités multiculturelles et multilingues du pays. Tout au long du texte, les auteurs plaident pour un passage des méthodologies monolingues et standardisées vers des approches alternatives et inclusives, fondées sur les cadres théoriques du translanguaging et de l'écologie des langues.

La réflexion souligne l'importance de stratégies éducatives ascendantes (bottom-up) qui permettent d'autonomiser les enseignants et les apprenants afin qu'ils puissent questionner les formes linguistiques dominantes et défendre la préservation des langues minoritaires et marginalisées. Cette perspective s'avère particulièrement pertinente dans les salles de classe et dans les contextes multilingues où coexistent langues étrangères et langues autochtones.

En adoptant le cadre de l'écologie des langues, les auteurs mettent en lumière l'interdépendance des langues, en tenant compte des facteurs sociaux, psychologiques, politiques et environnementaux que l'approche du translanguaging considère comme essentiels à un processus pédagogique dynamique. En définitive, cette perspective esquisse les contours d'un paradigme éducatif plus inclusif, équitable et durable, capable d'articuler les savoirs locaux et globaux.

Mots-clés : Diversité linguistique, écologie des langues, didactique des langues, multilinguisme, translanguaging.

Resumo

Esse artigo reflexivo explora as implicações das práticas contra-hegemônicas no ensino das línguas estrangeiras na Colômbia, realçando algumas desarticulações que se apresentam com relação às relações multiculturais e multilingues do país. Ao longo do texto, os autores advogam por um câmbio das metodologias monolíngues e estandarizadas pelos enfoques alternativos e inclusivos baseados nos marcos da translinguagem e a ecologia das línguas. A reflexão se acentua com a importância das estratégias educativas do baixo para o alto que empoderem aos professores e aos estudantes para afrontar as formas linguísticas dominantes e advogar pela preservação das línguas minoritárias e marginadas. Aquilo é essencial nas salas de aula e nos contextos multilingues onde coexistem tanto as línguas estrangeiras quanto as nativas. Adotando a ecologia das línguas, os autores sublinham a interconexão das línguas considerando os fatores sociais, psicológicos, políticos e ambientais, que a translíngüagem tem na conta como essenciais para um processo pedagógico. Na última instância, essa perspectiva vigia um paradigma mais inclusivo, equitativo, e sustentável, que liga o conhecimento local e global.

Palavras chave: Diversidade linguística, ecologia das línguas, ensino das línguas, multilinguismo, translinguagem.

Introduction

Government guidelines that establish educational policies in Colombia form the basis for understanding how foreign languages are taught and learned in various multilingual contexts and learning environments across the nation. In addition to contributing to the instrumentalization and fossilization of the country's language teaching and learning pedagogies, these policies appear to contradict the principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism views as asserted in ethno-education. Guerrero (2010) and Usma-Wilches (2009) contend that by focusing on Anglo-white methodologies through the medium of English, bilingual policies have embraced a monocultural and homogenous perspective while disregarding diversity and the value of otherness.

This standardization of approaches is associated with implementing the parameters set up by the Common European Framework of Reference to decide distinct levels of ability in English language proficiency through courses and tests that use uniform patterns of mass application. (Fandiño-Parra, 2021; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021).

Students' and teachers' identities, as well as their academic performance, are impacted by a lack of knowledge about Colombians' multilingual and multicultural traits (Cruz-Arcila, 2020; Gutierrez & Aguirre Ortega, 2022; Mosquera Perez, 2022; Zwisler, 2018). For instance, teachers are portrayed in the "Estándares" as clerks who faithfully carry out the orders of a higher authority (Guerrero, 2010), negating the significance of instructors as technologists and ignoring the interactions between languages and their settings. However, contrary to those limited perspectives, the teachers have shown that their work involves much more than teaching. According to Bonilla-Mora and López-Urbina (2021) "teachers confront themselves with their thoughts and beliefs and about their role as teachers and, in general, the construction of their link to the social, political, economic, and cultural world around them" (p. 15), this change is reflected in their desire to be included in research where they express discomfort and offer novel and thought-provoking approaches to language instruction.

One of the most recent iterations of the National Bilingualism Program, published by the Ministry of National Education [Ministerio de Educación Nacional – MEN] (2021), which is based on the National Development Plan 2018–2022, recognizes the nation's linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity by promoting the teaching of second and foreign languages. So, it aims to address the restrictions and intends to respond to the country's needs and attend to the current regulations (MEN, 2021). However, through the Intercultural Bilingual Education Program [PEIB - for its acronym in Spanish] that the Ministry has been developing since 2023, the strategies of the previous program continue to be implemented and the suggested curriculum for teaching the foreign language French is presented (MEN, 2023); although, at the time of writing this article, the authors did not find a document with the program guidelines.

According to the authors of this article, the ecology of language principles should benefit all parties, allowing teachers and students to actively support the voices of those who value their language and identity while simultaneously opposing hegemonic perspectives that have traditionally prioritized the dominant group's language. A more equitable and inclusive learning environment can be achieved by implementing translanguaging and the ecology of languages. This study examines the potential for counter-hegemonic language instruction in Colombia while exploring its implications for

the next generation and its impact on education policy development. The authors take sustainability and linguistic variety into account in this reflection. For the cultural and linguistic environment to be healthy, the language ecosystem—which guarantees linguistic diversity—is essential. This reflection can enhance understanding and engagement, especially for students who are learning in a language that is not their first.

The study of languages in their psychological, social, and environmental contexts is known as the ecology of languages, much like ecology, which studies living things in their natural habitats. Maphosa (2021) affirms that language ecology is also partly sociological because language only functions in relating its users to one another and to nature. This field examines how languages interact with each other and with their speakers, taking into consideration the sociolinguistic environment, the impact of social factors such as identity, power, and community on language use, and the development and multilingualism, including how individuals and communities manage and use their linguistic resources. According to Kamali and Nazari (2023), the ecological framework helps understand how emotion and identity, which are fundamentally ecological constructions, dialectically affect teachers' professionalism.

The way a language's ecosystem works in connection to its users when it comes to language use, translanguaging is a method that enables people to use their whole linguistic repertoire for learning and communication. Translanguaging is a concept in bilingual and multilingual education that refers to the process by which multilingual speakers use their languages as an integrated communication system (García & Li, 2016). Instead of treating languages as separate entities, translanguaging recognizes that multilingual individuals draw on all their linguistic resources to make meaning, communicate, and learn.

Even though plurilingualism identifies languages, including the native language, its goal is to move the students toward full-native proficiency in the national language by changing students' identities, rather than affirming their own (García & Otheguy, 2020). Overall, translanguaging challenges traditional views of language separation and promotes a more holistic understanding of how multilingual people use language in dynamic and adaptive ways by recognizing and valuing the multiple languages that students bring to the classroom. And endorsing a sense of pride and empowerment in their linguistic abilities. Among other proceeds, translanguaging can be used as a pedagogical strategy to support learning by allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire and promote an inclusive environment where all linguistic backgrounds are respected.

Ecology of Languages: A Holistic Perspective

The ecology of language is a framework for the study of language as conceptualized primarily in Einar Haugen's work (1972), where he defines language ecology as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (p. 57). On his part, after examining education as a nested ecosystem with multiple layers, Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced ecology into the field of education. In 1993, the same author went on to characterize this phenomenon as having four interconnected stages: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. According to Kamali and Nazari (2023), "these phases are essential for identifying the intricate ecosystem in which educators and students live (p. 3).

The term "ecology of language" was coined in the 1990s when international organizations such as the United Nations [UN] realized how crucial language learning was to promote national

integration (Blyth & Thoms, 2021; Eliasson, 2015; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2008). Tactlessly, those organizations just included certain languages in the merger of nations and infringed on the rights to the language of indigenous and minority languages by excluding them.

Kramersch (2002, 2008) defined language ecology as the study and understanding of the interactions between languages and their context, within the social and psychological effects intrinsic to the language. The author affirms that a language should not be treated simply as a structural system (phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.) that exists somehow independently of its speakers, and it is impossible to understand the language without the speakers. This means language ecology considers the social and psychological situation and how learners determine language comprehension (Blyth & Thoms, 2021; Kramersch, 2002, 2008; Vaishali & Rukmini, 2021).

Sharma et al. (2020) elucidated that language ecology is related to variations in language in contact between individuals. In other words, language only works when users interact in social and natural environments; people who learn the language determine the language's ecology and use it to share ideas, culture, and experiences. This indicates that utilizing a language requires sophisticated social knowledge and comprehension rather than just stringing words together to convey our ideas (Fu et al., 2019). According to Gabryś-Barker (2017), multilingualism and what it means to be multilingual are complex phenomena that transcend language alone. This includes a “psychological, social, and educational” approach and an analysis of language, but it also relies on the understanding of the “I” as a language user and evolves in various linguistic communities (p. 91). Consequently, a classroom can be viewed as a microcosm of society and an ecosystem. Every teacher and student contribute their ethnicity, expertise, and life experiences to this ecosystem, which can be used in a variety of ways. The curriculum is then organized, and modalities of engagement are formed by teachers and students (Sharma et al., 2020).

The ecology of language analogies holds that, like living things, languages are dynamic, influenced by other languages in their linguistic environment, and at risk of extinction from the influence of more powerful languages (Hornberger, 2002). These power dynamics between languages have an impact on speakers of those languages, particularly linguistic minorities whose native tongue or languages differ from the nation's dominant language or languages. It is in this context that the ecology of learning must consider the learner's social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and political characteristics. This is the environment that forbids individualism; the needs and knowledge of the different groups and places, including the diverse local and global ontological components, must be taught and should be considered while teaching and learning. According to Jordan (2015), Le Gal (2018), Li et al. (2021), and Zaidi and Rowsell (2017), this is a component of the ecological system of the same co-construction that ought to be applied to the educational materials.

When students are learning a foreign language, true language learning expands their linguistic repertoire without limiting their use of native languages or sign languages (Blackledge, 2008; Allard, 2017; García & Lin, 2016; Petrov & Razumovskaya, 2021; Tay & Ng, 2021). This refers to how the student develops autonomous learning skills, self-regulation, and metalinguistic abilities while managing to play a part in their education and becoming a critical and analytical user in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching (Blyth & Thoms, 2021; Allard, 2017; García & Lin, 2016; Tay & Ng, 2021). Students gain empowerment and an understanding of the social, economic, political, and cultural

aspects of the country where their identity and language originate, as well as those that are present in the language they are learning.

Since foreign language-focused bilingualism impacts our students' learning process not only in terms of language proficiency but also in terms of self-awareness, identity formation, and perception of their place in society, it can endanger so-called minority languages by ignoring their knowledge and reducing opportunities for coexistence with other languages. Fostering domestic and global educational approaches that support individuals' social, psychological, and economic growth is essential (Allard, 2017; Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Hopkins et al., 2022; Petrov & Razumovskaya, 2021).

Otherwise, rather than addressing the various perspectives, epistemologies, and practices of all the actors embedded in the local and global contexts, we might anticipate an education that imposes an ideology imposed by the dominant groups (Allard, 2017; Bettney, 2022; Blyth & Thoms, 2021; García & Lin, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

Towards an Epistemological Rupture

According to the reasons depicted above, De Sousa Santos (2009) and Jenson and De Sousa Santos (2018) insist on an epistemological rupture in science and learning, returning to the importance of a learning policy that is structured based on the local, bottom-up policies, in a democratic techno culture, where oppressed groups have a voice. This situation appears repeatedly in studies that foreign language teachers performed in Colombia, highlighting the need to consider the local knowledge, the native languages, and the context in the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational policies (Bonilla et al., 2018; Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada Sánchez, 2016; Usma Wilches, 2009, 2015).

Furthermore, language learning processes must benefit all participants so that teachers and students can disrupt some hegemonic perceptions that have always preferred the dominant group's language and begin strengthening the voices of those who value their language and identity. Likewise, national and institutional policies are obliged to address the different realities of the country, not only in urban areas, where, fortunately, geographically, they benefit from greater access to resources, but in rural areas that require greater attention and greater actions to close the educational gap. This fact has revealed that students formed to be foreign language teachers are unaware of their own cultural and linguistic diversity (Arismendi-Gómez, 2016; Bettney, 2022; Usma Wilches, 2009, 2015).

Even though education must respond to global demands, ensuring equality and coverage, it is essential to see students as human beings with requirements, contexts, and linguistic diversity; features that put them apart from the instrumentalization, avoiding the idea of the language as a mere tool, or an instrument of communication (Freire, 2006; Gimeno-Sacristan, 2005; Scott, 2017; Suzina & Tufte, 2020).

Nowadays, regarding foreign language teachers in Colombia, it is evident that they are forced to align curricula with an agenda permeated by aspects of globalization and neoliberalism that increase the demands of what they should achieve in their classroom (Bettney, 2022; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). In addition, most of the B.A. programs do not include the teaching of any native language within their curriculum, but rather as elective and optional subjects (Arismendi-Gómez, 2016; De Mejía, 2012, 2016). However, according to the Douglas Fir Group (2016) and Jin et al. (2021), teachers, from an ecological perspective of learning, must understand their roles within the various ecologies

and systems. Within this framework, three systems should be considered to understand the roles of language teachers: the microsystem, the mesosystem, and the macrosystem.

At the microsystem or personal level, teachers are immersed in institutional actions and practices that modify their identity. The teachers' identity idea is given from the different social and cultural realities, contexts, and situations of learning and teaching, and their own emotions and moral values (Blyth & Thoms, 2021; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Hilchey, 2021). In the process of developing their professional identity, teachers could have the opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge and practical actions. This integration enables them to assert their roles as educators and contribute to societal development while simultaneously validating their language proficiency according to international standards. However, they may occasionally overlook the ecological aspects of language and learning.

The above may be related to the construction of new concepts of interculturality, which has a direct relationship with decoloniality in the sense that it is configured from an emancipatory sense of identity, deconstruction, continuous resistance, and constant construction (Álvarez Valencia & Valencia, 2023; Walsh, 2018)

Power groups have perpetuated traditions, knowledge, and the reason for being from a hierarchy that makes invisible the cultural differences influenced by the political, social, gender, and economic factors, especially when these correspond to a minority whose knowledge construction processes can be considered inferior for not aligning with the factor or scheme commonly known by the group or members of the elite group.

Unfortunately, on several occasions, teachers of foreign languages are measured by the level of linguistic skills given by native experts in the target language, leaving aside the struggles that they face day by day within their academic context. Here, the phenomenon of valuing the native teacher of a foreign language more than the non-native teacher of a foreign language is again seen, and where the identity of the non-native teacher of a foreign language seems to be subject to the perception that the native expert may have of him, who can sometimes denigrate his knowledge and identity (Bettney, 2022; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

The mesosystem or interpersonal level is associated with the relationship between school and home, in which each school forms an institutional policy through national policies (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Jin et al., 2021). In our case, students in primary, secondary, and higher education must develop communicative skills in English according to the national curriculum. Still, a problem emerges in most of the public schools in urban and rural areas where there is a lack of teachers of foreign languages or a lack of preparation. Ortiz García and Contreras Pinilla (2023) "The main challenge that teachers have encountered is teaching the language in an improvised way because they report not having enough preparation to teach English as it might be done in urban areas" (p. 20). This reality does not guarantee that students reach an appropriate level of learning a foreign language.

At the macrosystem level, we find the policies, socio-political contexts, and cultural backgrounds that inspire the different policies for language teaching as the bilingualism plans and national curriculum that establish the parameters that teachers must achieve effectively (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Jin et al., 2021). At the macro level, and according to students' multilingual characteristics, education

policymakers must re-examine language education policies and restructure the curriculum (Bui & Tai, 2022). In addition, it is essential to decrease the consumption of materials that do not adapt to students' needs. It would be worth looking for alliances between local educational institutions and experts in language to promote the creation of high-quality materials that advocate constant reflection, curricular reorientation, and non-self-marginalization (Jordan, 2015; Li et al., 2021; Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017). In this context, educators can actively engage in classroom dynamics and emerge as pivotal contributors to the collaborative development of pedagogical resources that genuinely reflect linguistic and sociocultural diversity. This underscores the necessity for both teachers and students to acknowledge and value their native languages and cultural backgrounds through the integration of authentic instructional materials.

Education in second and foreign languages should strive for social justice, addressing contextual needs, promoting learning equity, and ensuring success in bilingual education. Language should be understood as a vital means of expressing thought and facilitating communication across various contexts (Allard, 2017; García & Lin, 2016). It is essential to cultivate a conscious multilingual perspective that does not prioritize dominant languages but instead recognizes and values native languages (García & Lin, 2016; Ortega, 2019).

Translanguaging as an Option

Translanguaging is a social practice, and the learner makes a transition from one linguistic culture to another within the communication process (Baranova et al., 2021). First, this transition as a social practice challenges the stability and immutability of culture by adapting its meanings in a dynamic dialogue between diverse cultures in a constantly changing world. Authors such as Kohl et al. (2020) argue that linguistic diversity nurtures the diversity of identity, thereby protecting biodiversity and fostering a deeper understanding of multiculturalism. Translanguaging helps people learn by using multiple languages together. It looks at how different languages connect and with the situations they are used in, which is the basis of language ecology. It also thinks about how language affects people socially and emotionally.

Stornaiuolo et al. (2017) define translanguaging from a more ecological point of view, including all literacies, both for oral and written comprehension and production, as well as for interaction and culture. Although several facets within the classroom can vary depending on the context, some characteristics remain as ideological, social, economic, and cultural aspects. This generates the need to consider their different and multilingual linguistic repertoires within student learning, through translingual teaching and practice (Le Gal, 2018; Ortega, 2019; Pacheco et al., 2019; Pino-Rodríguez et al., 2019). Thus, through a translanguaging perspective, the students and teachers of the courses will be continuous learners, and through the interaction between people, texts, and different elements that are developed in class, they will create meanings. As these meanings emerge from a constant interaction without making the other invisible, more significant connections and alignments are created between the context, the learning resources, and the learning itself (Pacheco et al., 2019; Stornaiuolo et al., 2017).

Pacheco et al. (2019) and Pino-Rodríguez et al. (2019) advocate for a shift in perspective, where the speaker is understood and perceived as someone who collaboratively constructs meaning through the use of all available linguistic resources. They also propose a holistic approach to teaching and learning that incorporates all relevant pedagogical concepts within a continuous communication

process. In this view, learning a foreign language is seen as a complex process involving various dialects, languages, and linguistic varieties. As noted by Esquicha (2022), translanguaging acknowledges the diverse contexts within the educational landscape. It embraces the ecosystem of learning, facilitating an exchange of languages without elevating one language above another. Within this ecosystem, students can share their unique contexts and realities, fostering authentic communication.

Furthermore, translanguaging is a strategy that works to empower non-native speakers and undermines the stand-up philosophy. Students may employ a more diverse and multicultural linguistic repertoire because of this kind of two-language learning integration.

Cox and Phipps (2022) claim that translanguaging opens a way to combine a multilingual approach with decolonizing pedagogy, where learners use all their linguistic resources to support their new learning and make connections with the new language. Translanguaging is compatible with the objectives of decolonization since it places learners at the center of their speaker-oriented learning and does not impose linguistic codes. On the contrary “when students translate or codeswitch, they develop metalinguistic awareness” (Canagarajah, 2023, p. 8), it promotes a sense of dignity and respect for their identity and not just the ability to speak a language and enables learners to know that their language has value and meaning and that this knowledge is comprehensive and will allow them to expand their repertoire and add knowledge to the new language (Canagarajah, 2013, 2023).

Regarding the difference between translanguaging and plurilingualism, García and Otheguy (2020) affirm that the objective of multilingual education is for speakers to develop a repertoire of languages, “but translanguaging is focused on working with bilingual students and ensuring that bilingualism is reflected as a bilingual being” (p. 8). As a result, Colombian academics may continue to develop various approaches to language learning that involve the interaction of students’ social and historical factors (Alberto Mora et al., 2022; Álvarez Valencia & Valencia, 2023; Clavijo-Olarte, 2021; Cruz-Arcila, 2020; Fandiño-Parra, 2021). This type of learning goes beyond simply exchanging linguistic codes without meaning; it also involves developing intercultural communication skills that highlight multiculturalism and multilingualism.

We found that translanguaging is a means of integrating social spaces and linguistic codes that were previously separated due to monolingual practices, because our goal is to organize and support student learning through the analysis of numerous power, cultural, material, and social relations that go beyond the communicative, linguistic, and rational. As agents in the building of the ecology of languages in a diverse world, teachers can now create more inclusive learning materials and raise awareness of others and themselves (Fandiño-Parra, 2021; Pino-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Tay & Ng, 2021).

Significance of the Reflections in Colombia

For our context, statistics from the Instituto Caro y Cuervo (2024) and the United Nations Organization Colombia [UN] (2023) suggest that, in addition to Spanish, there are 65 Indigenous languages, two creoles, one Romani language, and a sign language in Colombia. Experts estimate that thirteen languages are in danger of going extinct based on this data, and the chances of the remaining languages surviving are not better (UN, 2023).

The current situation in Colombia is strikingly like the same technical approach: “Multilingualism

has not been developed as a holistic perspective that considers an ecological understanding of the country's social organization instead of a view of language policies that recognize diversity and different linguistic resources as equally important.” (Miranda et al., 2024, p. 7). The multilingual repertoire emphasizes utilizing one or two standardized preferred languages, reducing the scope of language education and learning, even if data demonstrates Colombia's linguistic and multicultural diversity.

Accordingly, the Ministry of National Education [MEN] declared the National Bilingualism Program 2018–2022, which acknowledges Colombia's native and Creole languages as well as its linguistic and cultural diversity. They introduced the functional plurilingual approach in the same program, which described foreign languages as vehicles of communication, which, in the authors' opinion, is an instrumental view of the languages.

Regretfully, the National Bilingualism Program 2018–2022's functional plurilingual approach does not yet address the linguistic and multicultural objectives, nor is it the solution that educators and learners seek to become more decolonial. According to García and Otheguy (2020), “plurilingual and intercultural education should protect the right to learn additional languages, as well as the right to speak a first language and the right to quality education in the language of instruction” (p. 6). This implies that tolerance for both the first language and other languages is necessary during the teaching and learning process.

An ecological perspective emphasizes the interdependence of languages and the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity for the health of the cultural environment. It encourages educational practices that support the coexistence and mutual enrichment of multiple languages. This entails developing laws and initiatives in Colombia that preserve and restore native tongues, guaranteeing their survival for upcoming generations.

Under a nation with a high level of linguistic diversity that is frequently in danger, this viewpoint is especially pertinent. Teachers may help ensure that all the nation's languages remain resilient and survive by implementing an ecological approach to language instruction. A revolutionary strategy that upends traditional power structures and promotes a more inclusive society, contra-hegemonic language training is helpful as Colombia continues to negotiate its linguistic and cultural diversity.

Significant challenges include the need for comprehensive policy support, a shortage of financing, and resistance from those who favor the status quo. However, there are plenty of chances as well. Kohl et al. (2020) concur that linguistic diversity promotes multiculturalism and that acknowledging the value of linguistic diversity in support of indigenous rights creates an environment that is favorable to change.

Involving the community is essential to this process. Involving Indigenous people in the creation and execution of language education initiatives guarantees their effectiveness and cultural relevance. Furthermore, the effectiveness of contra-hegemonic language instruction depends on teacher preparation programs that emphasize bilingual education and culturally sensitive teaching techniques (Álvarez Valencia & Valencia, 2023; Clavijo-Olarte, 2021; Fandiño-Parra, 2021).

Considering the scenario outlined in this document, the reflection highlights the importance of understanding the interactions between languages, as well as their social and psychological impacts within their respective contexts. Such comprehension is essential for preserving the intrinsic value of

languages and safeguarding the linguistic rights of speakers, thereby preventing the erosion of native languages.

The importance of creating our learning processes is perhaps the most important capacity that individuals in a community need to participate in a complex and disruptive world, but at the same time to preserve our identity and maintain a sense of belonging and well-being (Alberto-Mora, 2023; García & Otheguy, 2020). To do this, the ecology of learning requires a review of the macro system where different teaching policies underline that establish the parameters to achieve inclusive learning from dynamic scenarios that adjust to multimodal and multilingual communication situations, and where students use languages for specific purposes.

Because translanguaging is based on the pedagogy of the linguistic repertoire concept in which learners use all their linguistic resources to support their new learning and equally make connections to the new language, translanguaging opens a way to combine a multilingual approach under a decolonizing pedagogy (Alberto-Mora, 2023; García & Otheguy, 2020). Thus, the results showed translanguaging as a social practice and that the learner makes a transition from one linguistic culture to another within the significant communication process.

Teachers are aware that policies, teaching curricula, and language learning need to be reviewed so that there is diversification, interculturality, and multilanguage. Scholars such as De Mejía (2012, 2016), Mora et al. (2019), Mejía Mejía, (2016), Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2021), and Sánchez Moreano et al. (2023) have criticized the deficient concept of multilingualism in which a priority is given to learning English, minimizing the learning of native or other languages.

The authors of this thoughtful paper acknowledge that translanguaging is one way to challenge counter-hegemonic pedagogies, along with strategies like hybrid language production and linguistic social position negotiation. However, we truly believe that ecological education ideas like translanguaging are the best way to begin changing legislation. Translanguaging not only involves aspects related to written languages, but also bets on the multimodality of expressions and manifestations of language, so in a country like most Latin American countries, translanguaging makes sense by giving value, voice, and position to languages that do not have a written system, but rather an oral tradition such as some indigenous languages or other languages whose records are carried out within a symbolic system (Alberto Mora et al., 2022; Álvarez Valencia & Valencia, 2023; García & Li, 2016; Li et al., 2020).

In this sense, an intrinsic nature is observed in the interaction of languages and their continuous coexistence and co-construction of knowledge that their speakers make at a glocal level, considering all the complexities that frame it. Teachers around the country have highlighted the complexities of teaching foreign languages in monolingual and even multilingual contexts, but with the obligation to comply with a pre-established curriculum that does not meet the needs of students and that is sometimes disjointed from their social, cultural, and political realities (see Araque Jaimes et al., 2023; Andrade et al., 2024; Carrero Corzo et al., 2023; Guerrero Parra et al., 2024; Narváez Vásquez, 2023). This fact has also been documented by experts in other contexts where a call has been made to decolonize didactics and how research is approached, since from there, thousands of teachers create their initiatives to be applied in the classroom.

Several teachers who have completed master's degrees have encouraged our reflection by highlighting the paradoxes they claim they encounter daily when implementing standards or rules that are based on various social, cultural, political, linguistic, and economic circumstances (Araque Jaimes et al., 2023; Andrade et al., 2024; Carrero Corzo et al., 2023; Guerrero Parra et al., 2024; Narváz Vázquez, 2023). These contradictions are not only apparent in curriculum design, but also in the conventions around proper language usage, literature, grammar, and all other principles derived from literature and practice in language instruction. The issue is not in acknowledging and using existing linguistic information, but rather in using it to undermine the credibility of its speaker community or, on a smaller scale, to influence a learner's or immigrant's identity during the learning process.

In this regard, García et al. (2021) invite us to look for more possibilities that go beyond vocabulary assessments that can limit students further by presenting creative and real challenges regarding the use of the language and managing to motivate students in their classrooms, in their constant learning of languages again, not limiting them to a target language or because they are national curriculum. The authors critically examine the concept of linguistic competence, highlighting its potential role in sustaining colonial dynamics and subsequently the dehumanization of speakers (García et al., 2021). They question the implications of this understanding and its contribution to ongoing processes of marginalization within language practices. The fact that multilingualism reacts to global markets and that translanguaging might provide a means of distancing oneself from the logic developed throughout time under imperialist ideologies that address the production demands of nations must be considered.

Conclusions

The implications of contra-hegemonic language teaching for future generations embracing the ecology of languages and translanguaging in Colombia are profound and multifaceted. By preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages, Colombia can maintain its rich cultural diversity, which is a source of national pride and global interest. As languages are a vital part of cultural identity, future generations will have a strong connection to their indigenous heritage; these generations will lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their history and traditions. A contra-hegemonic language teaching empowers marginalized communities by validating their languages and cultures. This empowerment can lead to greater social inclusion and reduced discrimination. Students from indigenous and minority language backgrounds will have better access to education that respects and incorporates their linguistic and cultural identities, leading to improved educational outcomes.

With reference to the theoretical framework's components, the authors of this paper stress that educational policies for foreign language instruction and acquisition should be grounded on local knowledge, which will then be reinforced by external and international references. The authors discuss the cognitive advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism that will be inherited by future generations, including enhanced creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. As a result, education will not be viewed as an endogenous process; rather, it will follow the ecological principles of learning in a world where people live and interact continuously. This is made even more significant by the increasing usage of ICTs in many facets of human existence.

The health of the cultural and linguistic ecosystem depends on maintaining linguistic diversity, which can be accomplished by accepting the ecology of languages. Linguistic diversity supports

sustainable development by fostering inclusive communities where everyone's viewpoints are valued and heard. As future generations grow more conscious of linguistic diversity, they are more inclined to favor policies that foster cultural integration and language preservation.

In conclusion, teaching languages in a manner that challenges hegemony can help Colombians build a society that is more equitable, diverse, and culturally rich for future generations. By embracing translanguaging and the ecosystem of languages, Colombia can safeguard its linguistic heritage and promote the well-being of all its citizens.

Statement of originality

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

Conflicts of interest

We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

Author Contributions

Johanna Patricia López Urbina: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Project Administration, Resources, Software, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing.

Martha Isabel Bonilla Mora: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing.

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AI-powered Natural Language Processing in Language Education: A Systematic Review

Procesamiento del Lenguaje Natural Basado en IA para la Educación en Lenguas: Una Revisión Sistemática

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Abstract

This systematic review explores the potential of Natural Language Processing (NLP) based Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to enhance language development in higher education. Following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), we reviewed ($n=63$) documents published between 2015 and 2023, exploring how NLP has been used in language education within processes of linguistic development, biliteracy instruction, and language assessment. The reviewed literature reveals exploratory integrations and empirical evidence of the impact of these technologies in language instruction, learning, and assessment, which sheds light on key application areas of AI-powered NLP tools, such as enhancing literacy instruction, providing personalized feedback, tracking students' progress and weaknesses, and promoting accessibility. Existing challenges and future directions include honest concerns like plagiarism, factfulness, and hallucinations as ethical considerations that reveal the ongoing debates and efforts to leverage AI-powered technologies to current curricular approaches in higher education.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, digital literacy, language education, natural language processing, systematic literature review

Resumen

Esta revisión sistemática investiga el potencial del Procesamiento del Lenguaje Natural (PLN) basado en tecnologías de Inteligencia Artificial (IA) para mejorar el desarrollo lingüístico en la educación superior. A partir del protocolo PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), se revisaron ($n=63$) documentos publicados entre 2015 y 2023 para explorar el uso de PLN en la enseñanza de lenguas dentro de procesos de enseñanza de la (bi)litteracia y evaluación de lenguas. La literatura revisada revela integraciones exploratorias y evidencia empírica sobre el impacto de estas tecnologías en la enseñanza, el aprendizaje y la evaluación, lo cual permite identificar áreas de aplicación clave como el mejoramiento del desarrollo de la literacia, la retroalimentación personalizada, el seguimiento del progreso de los estudiantes y sus respectivos aspectos de mejora, y la promoción de la accesibilidad. También se presentan desafíos existentes y direcciones futuras, así como consideraciones éticas que incluyen el plagio, veracidad de la información y las alucinaciones. Los trabajos revisados demuestran los debates y esfuerzos actuales por incorporar tecnologías impulsadas por IA en los enfoques curriculares de la educación superior.

Palabras clave: educación de lenguas, inteligencia artificial, literacia digital, procesamiento del lenguaje natural, revisión sistemática de la literatura

Résumé

Cette revue systématique examine le potentiel des technologies d'intelligence artificielle (IA) fondées sur le traitement automatique du langage naturel (TALN) pour favoriser le développement linguistique dans l'enseignement supérieur. Conformément aux lignes directrices PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), nous avons analysé 63 documents publiés entre 2015 et 2023 afin d'explorer les usages du TALN dans l'enseignement des langues, notamment dans les processus de développement linguistique, d'enseignement de la littératie et d'évaluation des compétences langagières.

La littérature examinée met en évidence des intégrations encore exploratoires ainsi que des données empiriques attestant de l'impact de ces technologies sur l'enseignement, l'apprentissage et l'évaluation des langues. Ces travaux permettent d'identifier plusieurs domaines d'application majeurs des outils de TALN alimentés par l'IA, notamment l'amélioration de l'enseignement de la littératie, la fourniture de rétroactions personnalisées, le suivi des progrès et des difficultés des apprenants, ainsi que la promotion de l'accessibilité.

Par ailleurs, la littérature met en lumière divers défis et perspectives futures, notamment des enjeux liés à l'intégrité académique tels que le plagiat, la véracité de l'information et les phénomènes d'« hallucination » générés par les systèmes d'IA. Ces considérations éthiques témoignent des débats et des efforts actuels visant à intégrer de manière critique les technologies fondées sur l'IA dans les approches curriculaires de l'enseignement supérieur.

Mots-clés: Enseignement des langues, intelligence artificielle, littératie numérique, traitement automatique du langage naturel, revue systématique de la littérature.

Resumo

Essa revisão sistemática investiga o potencial do processamento de linguagem natural (PLN) baseado na tecnologia da Inteligência artificial (IA) para melhorar o desenvolvimento linguístico no ensino superior. A partir do protocolo PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), foram revisados (n=63) documentos publicados entre 2015 e 2023 para explorar o uso do PLN no ensino das línguas em processos de ensino do (bi) letramento e avaliação das línguas. A literatura revisada revela integrações exploratórias e evidência empírica sobre o impacto dessas tecnologias no ensino, aprendizagem, e avaliação, o que permite identificar as áreas de aplicação chave como o melhoramento do desenvolvimento do letramento, a retroalimentação personalizada, o seguimento do processo dos estudantes e seus respectivos aspectos a melhorar, e a promoção da acessibilidade. Também se apresentam desafios existentes e futuras direções, bem como considerações éticas incluindo o plágio, a veracidade da informação, e as alucinações. Os trabalhos revisados demonstram os debates e esforços atuais por integrar tecnologias impulsadas pela IA nos enfoques curriculares dos ensino superior.

Palavras chave: Ensino das línguas, Inteligência artificial, Letramento digital, Processamento de linguagem natural, revisão sistemática da literatura.

Introduction

NLP as a subdiscipline of computational linguistics has been propelled by the use of AI-powered applications (Eisenstein, 2019; Meurers, 2012). This progress in the field has captured the attention of researchers and language educators (Bond et al., 2024; Chalmers et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023), who are eager to explore the varying ways in which AI could enhance administrative and educational processes such as teaching, learning, assessment. We differentiated the NLP area from the intricate web of AI because it provides a more focalized compilation of studies that could build a specific rationale for researchers and those interested in the field.

Even though NLP is a subfield of AI, previous approaches did not embrace AI technologies. Among these methods, prevalent approaches included rule-based systems, statistical NLP, and text classification. Since these systems lack the flexibility and complexity of modern techniques at the service of language education and assessment, we have decided to include in the review only those that include deep learning and machine learning-based NLP, such as Duolingo English Test, OpenBook, arText, iSTART, AutoTutor, CyWrite, etc. (see Findings below).

NLP techniques can be used to analyze, understand, and generate text, speech, and other forms of human language, encompassing the analysis, comprehension, and generation of text, speech, and other forms of human communication. A typical example could be the use of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) to provide personalized feedback to students' responses within a digital course. NLP-based AI has had significant advancements in the last years, such as Generative Pre-trained Transformers (Vaswani et al., 2017), which have rendered powerful processors and generators of natural language. Even so, language researchers and teachers still explore the possibilities and potential of these technologies in university research and classroom routines. These include language development, accommodations, test item generation, personalized feedback, and adaptive instruction, among others, which will be characterized in the review of the papers.

Universities have an intricate relationship with the social and productive areas of society. This relationship has led to several advancements across various domains, and so is the case with AI, which follows that nature. NLP-based AI has emerged as a promising tool in the field of language development, allowing for state-of-the-art approaches and expanding the scope of educational practices.

Literacy is an essential skill for success in higher education (Olave et al., 2013). Its development, typically attributed to the school, also manifests in higher education as students face increasingly demanding texts or are requested to produce sophisticated written content. Nowadays, literacy goes beyond being able to read or write (New London Group, 1996), leading to a revised framework of [academic] digital literacies and AI Literacy (Chan & Colloton, 2024). This is, as stated in Pegrum (2019, p. 462), “the ensemble of skills needed to effectively manage meaning in an era characterized by digitally networked communications, including blended communications that exploit both analogue and digital channels ...” As some students struggle with literacy, for instance, students not grasping what they read in complex expository texts (McNamara, 2022), traditional educational methods are often not effective enough for all learners or some higher education contexts. As an example, some students require an amount of ongoing feedback that traditional settings may not be able to provide regularly.

Additionally, literacy development has marked challenging prospects. Some of these are poor funding, lack of professional development programs, absenteeism, attrition rates, and diversity and

identity issues (Lippert et al., 2019). These converge in the need for more personalized assessment and large-scale marking, which has proven to be of high cost. Thus, the need for a link between NLP, [AI] Literacy Development, and Language Assessment appeals as the backbone that structures this paper.

NLP-based AI technologies offer fresh prospects for AI literacy development in higher education. These different applications are under development and studied across multiple functionalities as personalized feedback, identifying areas of weakness, and tracking student progress, among other functionalities, and through varied academic settings across the world (see Tables 2 and 3 below). Hence, the focus of this systematic review aims to provide a comprehensive snapshot and holistic view of the state of the art to offer valuable insights to classroom practitioners and pave the path for future research.

As NLP-based AI tools evolve, increasing their accuracy and sophistication, they will be more proficient at performing text understanding and generating tasks (Attali et al., 2023). This poses both challenges and opportunities for literacy development processes, which have been explored earlier by Murcia et al. (2025). The authors highlighted the increasing risk of Gen-AI dependency, attrition of academic trust, and loss of creativity and criticality while also presenting the possibility of critical uses to enhance student autonomy, assessment practices, and professional development processes. Yet, the possible applications are mostly unknown since the integration of these tools into language instruction, learning, and their incidence in the language assessment processes in classrooms are still underexplored. Thus, a solid conceptual and historical common ground should be established to open a potential research agenda.

Exploring these integrations in the academic sphere is of paramount importance, considering the opportunities, challenges, and ethical considerations. An active collaboration between researchers and educators should exist since this synergy may enable the development and implementation of more effective NLP-based AI interventions for literacy development. However, there seems to be scarce collaboration between AI developers and educators because of the perceived distance between their disciplines, which may limit the potential of such technologies for literacy development processes. As researchers and educators from different disciplines collaborate, they will be able to develop and implement more effective interventions for literacy development and language assessment. Thus, an important step is to explore the available research data about the application in higher education from 2015 up to 2023, to offer a baseline for further collaboration and exploration in the emerging interdisciplinary field. This review is constructed under the following research questions:

1. How has NLP been used in literacy instruction and language assessment in Higher Education institutions from 2015 to 2023?
2. What are the prevalent NLP software tools used in language education for higher education institutions in the period?
3. What challenges, future directions, and ethical concerns does the reviewed literature show about the implementation of NLP engines in language education?

Methodology

The aim of conducting a systematic review is to address inquiries by employing a clear, systematic, and reproducible search strategy. This process involves establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, facilitating the identification of studies (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2017). In this

sense, the review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

Data Sources and Literature Search

The initial searching stage was conducted through three databases: *Scopus*, *Web of Science (WoS)*, and *SpringerLink*. Only studies from 2015 to 2023 were included to ensure the review incorporated the most up-to-date literature available at the time of writing this paper. The search included three main concepts: Natural Language Processing, Language Education, and Higher Education; yet, all of them have possible sub-terms that could be found in the literature. Thus, the sub terms are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Keywords for Database Search

Main term	Sub-terms with “OR” Boolean operators
Natural Language Processing	“Natural Language Processing” OR NLP OR “Natural Language Understanding” OR NLU OR “Natural Language Assessment” OR NLA OR “Intelligent Tutoring System” OR “Text Summarization” OR Chatbot
Language Education	“LANGUAGE EDUCATION” OR Literacy OR “Literacy Instruction” OR “Literacy Development” OR “Computer-assisted writing” OR “Intelligent Computer Assisted Language Learning” OR ICALL OR Reading OR Writing “Language Development”
Higher Education	“Higher Education” OR University OR College OR Education

For all the databases, the same search strategy was used:

(“Natural Language Processing” OR NLP OR “Natural Language Understanding” OR NLU OR “Natural Language Assessment” OR NLA OR “Intelligent Tutoring System” OR “Text Summarization” OR Chatbot) AND (“LANGUAGE EDUCATION” OR Literacy OR “Literacy Instruction” OR “Literacy Development” OR “Computer-assisted writing” OR “Intelligent Computer Assisted Language Learning” OR ICALL OR Reading OR Writing “Language Development”) AND (“Higher Education” OR University OR College OR Education).

Study Selection Process

With this search strategy, we found 554 documents in *Scopus*, 671 in *WoS*, and 1054 in *SpringerLink*, making it a total of ($n=2279$), which were later screened to a final compilation of ($n=63$) studies (see Table 3 in the Findings).

Before the screening process, we filtered the duplicate articles and deleted them (ending up with 1914 documents). During the screening and eligibility processes, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were implemented (see Table 2).

Table 2.

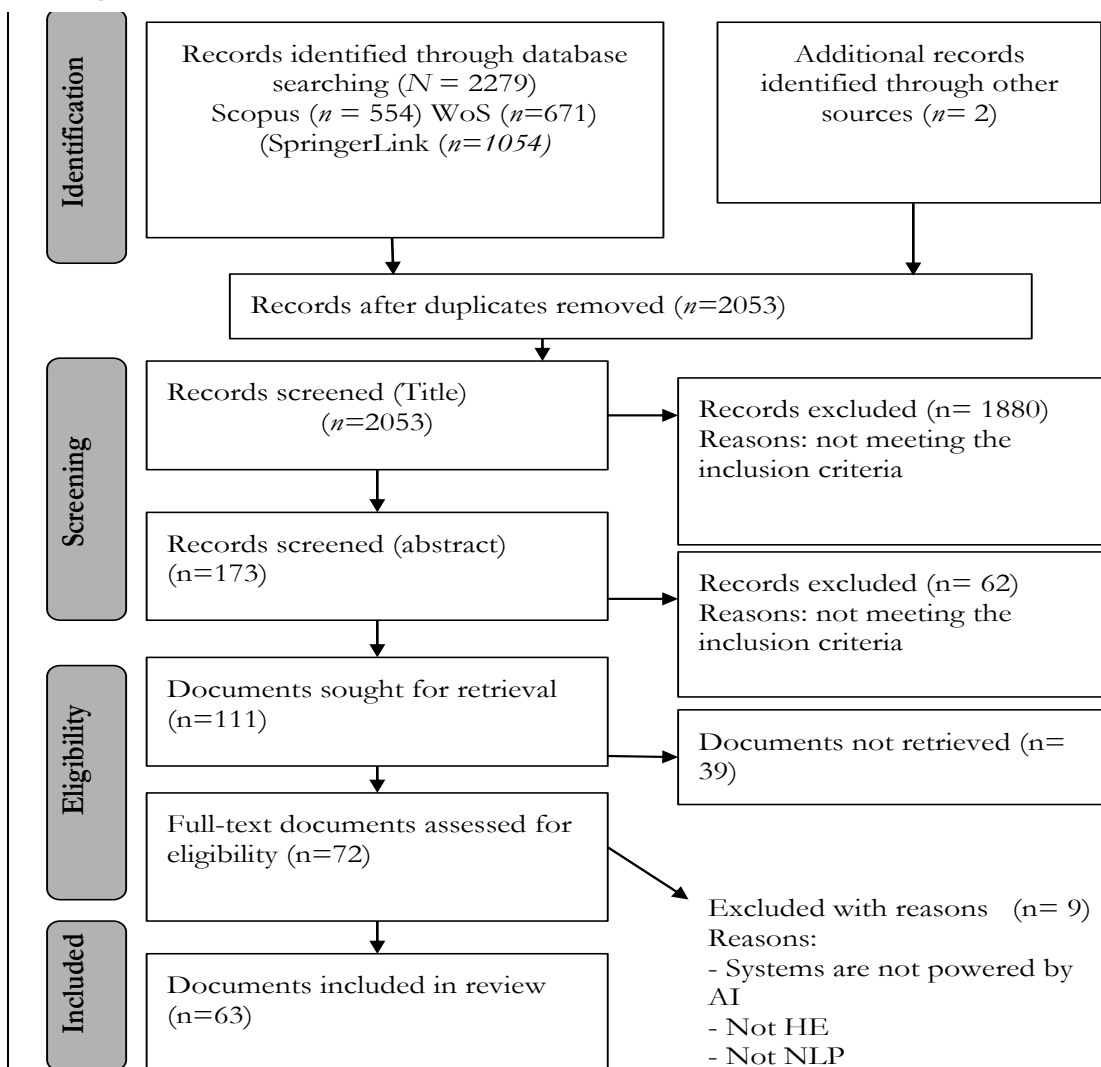
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article is accessible to the researchers and more focused on the educational factors than the technical ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article develops statistical or numerical-based information that is not accessible to the readers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles are in English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In languages other than English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers can access the full document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles cannot be downloaded.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles are within the 2015 and 2023 span. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older than 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles related to AI and subfields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not relate to AI.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belong to a higher education or adult education context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not about a higher education or adult education context.

The screening process (see Figure 1 below) had two stages: title screening and abstract screening. For both stages, researchers screened the records individually, labeling them as classified, unclassified, and neutral. The process showed an Inter-rater agreement of 0.92 for the title screening stage. For the abstract screening, the two researchers analyzed the dataset and decided upon the inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the articles. Both researchers discussed discrepancies in labeling or neutral records. Based on the inclusion/exclusion criteria, we reached a consensus on whether the document was moved to the next stage.

Figure 1.
Screening Process



Data Analysis

To extract data, articles were processed through ATLAS.ti 23 data analysis software using a content analysis approach: a method to generate codes from text which may turn into themes and findings. Initial codes were established based on the research questions and the documents were initially coded by a research assistant. Later, researchers reviewed the initial coding process and established pertinent themes for the study. These themes were then categorized into five subsections.

Findings

General Characteristics of the Review

In total, this systematic review included ($n=63$) articles, most of which are first-hand research articles ($n=47$). Additionally, a small percentage of articles are systematic reviews ($n=8$) and second-hand articles ($n=8$), both of which help to better understand the overall approaches, practices, and concerns regarding the use of NLP-based AI in HE for language education and literacy development. Table 3 presents a summary of the articles reviewed, considering the authors, year, and topic.

Table 3.

Articles Reviewed

#	Authors	Year	Topic	Type	Literacy focus	Country
1	Allen et al.	2017	Analysis of student writing	Research Article	L1	USA
2	Allen et al.	2015	Student's reading analysis	Research Article	L1	USA
3	Alrashid et al.	2022	AWE for reflective writing	Research Article	L1	UK
4	Attali et al.	2022	Automatic Item Generation	Research Article	L2	USA
5	Barbu et al.	2015	Text simplification	Research Article	L1	Europe
6	Bauer et al.	2023	Diagnostic assessment	Research Article	L1	Germany
7	Bradác et al.	2022	Personalized study plans	Research Article	L2	Czech Republic
8	Burstein et al.	2017	AWE	Research Article	L1	USA
9	Cerga-Pashoja et al.	2019	Assisted reading for autism	Research Article	L1	Europe
10	Chen et al.	2022	Educational technology	Review Article	L1/L2	China
11	Chong et al.	2020	Reflective writing analysis	Research Article	L1	Malaysia

12	Contreras et al.	2019	Automated Essay Scoring (AES) Question Generator	Research Article	L1	Malaysia
13	Crompton & Burke	2023	AI in HE	Review Article	L1/L2	USA
14	Demir	2020	Intelligent tutoring system (ITS) in English Language Education	Research Article	L2	Turkey
15	Dergaa et al.	2023	AI-generated text	Research article	L1	Asia
16	Fang et al.	2019	Conversation-based ITS for reading	Research Article	L1	USA
17	Feng et al.	2016	Automated error detector for ESL learners	Research Article	L2	USA
18	Fryer et al.	2017	Chatbot vs humans on language course interest	Research Article	L2	Japan
19	Fu & Gu	2020	Automatic scoring effect on continuous learning	Research Article	L2	China
20	Fung et al.	2020	Question generation for reading comprehension	Research Article	L2/L1	China
21	Gao & Passonneau	2021	AWE	Research Article	L1/L2	USA
22	Houston & Corrado	2023	LLM on Academia	Second-hand	L1/L2	USA
23	Huang et al.	2023	AI in Language Education	Review Article	L2	China
24	Jeon & Lee	2023	AI and human teacher collaboration	Research Article	L2	South Korea
25	Jeon et al.	2023	Chatbots for language learning	Review Article	L2	USA
26	Katsarou et al.	2023	Intelligent Virtual agents (IVA) on EFL education	Review article	L2	Europe
27	Kuhail et al.	2022	Educational Chatbots	Review Article	L1/L2	Non-specified
28	Li & Graesser	2020	IVA on summary writing	Research Article	L2	USA
29	Li et al.	2018	Students' academic language within an ITS	Research Article	L1	USA
30	Liang et al.	2021	AI in language education	Review article	L2/L1	Taiwan
31	Lim et al.	2022	Neural AWE for L2 writing	Research Article	L2	China
32	Lippert et al.	2019	Adaptive ITS for literacy development	Research Article	L1-L2	USA

33	Liu et al.	2017	Automated feedback generation	Research Article	L2	China
34	Liu et al.	2022	AI in Situational teaching	Review Article	L1/L2	Asia
35	Maqsood et al.	2022	AWE	Research Article	L2	Asia
36	McNamara et al.	2023	Adaptive comprehension and stealth literacy assessment	Research Article	L1	USA
37	McNamara et al.	2022	Adaptive comprehension and stealth literacy assessment	Research Article	L1	USA
38	Miaschi et al.	2021	Tracking L1 writing evolution	Research Article	L1	Italy
39	Minoofam et al.	2021	Dyslexic students' instruction	Research Article	L1	Iran
40	Miranda	2020	ITS for vocabulary acquisition	Research Article	L2	Philippines
41	Nehyba & Stefánik	2022	Deep learning and reflective writing	Research Article	L1	Czech Republic
42	Nguyen et al.	2022	Edtech for Codeswitching	Research Article	L2	UK
43	Nuñez & da Cunha	2021	Impact of gen-IA on the student writing process	Research Article	L1	Spain
44	Öncel et al.	2021	AWE on source-based writing	Research Article	L1	USA
45	Pengel et al.	2021	Chatbots for Self-regulated learning and automatic writing feedback	Research Article	L1	Germany
46	Pokrivcakova	2019	Teacher training for AI in EFL	Review Article	L2	Czech Republic
47	Rapp & Kauf	2018	Thesis Writing Instruction	Research Article	L1	Non-specified
48	Reyes R.	2019	Virtual assistants in education	Research Article	L1	Latin America
49	Rus & Ștefanescu	2016	Non-intrusive assessment with an intelligent tutoring system	Research Article	L1	USA
50	Salas-Pilco & Yang	2022	AI in HE	Review Article	L1/L2	Latin America
51	Shehab et al.	2016	AES (automated essay scoring)	Research Article	L1	Asia
52	Steuer et al.	2022	Automatic question generation for L2 reading	Research Article	L2	Egypt

53	Strobl et al.	2018	Digital support for academic writing	Review Article	L1/L2	Europe
54	Taele et al.	2020	Intelligent tutoring system for L2 writing	Research Article	L2	USA
55	Tyen et al.	2022	Chatbot for language practice	Research Article	L2	UK
56	Venegas	2021	Text classification	Research Article	L1	Latin America
57	Vitartas et al.	2019	ITS for assignment checking	Research Article	L1	Australia
58	Wambsganss et al.	2022	Automated feedback for argumentative writing	Research Article	L1	Europe
59	Whitlock & Bektik	2018	Automated scoring and Feedback for Large-scale assessment	Review Article	L1/L2	UK
60	Yan	2023	Chatbot impact on L2 writing	Research Article	L2	China
61	Yang & Stansfield	2022	Digital reading support through chatbots	Second-hand	L1/L2	UK
62	Zhang et al.	2023	chatbot-assisted learning	Review Article	L1	China
63	Ziegler et al.	2017	CALL, NLP, and second language acquisition	Research Article	L2	USA

All articles document the development and use of AI for education purposes with adult populations and higher education to promote language development. Some of these studies explore second language development, while others foster students' first language. The key findings of this review are classified into main application areas, these being NLP-based AI-assisted Language Instruction, Language Assessment and Feedback, as well as Challenges and Future Directions, and Ethical Considerations.

The geographical distribution of the review (eight countries/regions) is presented in Table 3. The data reveals that most of the articles are published in the USA ($n=19$) followed by Europe ($n=13$), whilst Australia only presents ($n=1$) document for consideration. The non-specified articles describe the study without disclosing their geographical location.

Overall, the analysis of the reviewed articles reveals a significant growing body of evidence supporting the implementation of NLP-based AI for Language Education. The following sections detail insights that highlight the advancements and critical areas presented in the studies.

NLP-based AI and Language Instruction

One of the primary applications of AI technologies identified in our review was supporting language instruction, with ($n=21$) of the total reviewed documents discussing this area. Figure 2 shows the number of citations/quotes that were generated out of the 21 documents, which shows the relevance or occurrence of each specific strategy among the documents. The main ways in which this

goal was attained was through the teaching of (specialized) vocabulary ($n=7$ codes); to support reading comprehension and student's reading skills ($n=27$ codes); to generate comprehension questions for students to answer when engaging in reading ($n=5$ codes); to support writing and foster writing skills ($n=9$ codes) among others.

Figure 2.

Prevalent Categories of NLP-based AI for Language Development



Several studies in the review explored the use of NLP for vocabulary development, suggesting its potential effectiveness and diverse applications within higher education. To illustrate, Miranda (2020) investigated an intelligent language tutoring system for acquiring Kapampangan vocabulary, showcasing its potential for first language learners. Additionally, Huang et al. (2023) mentioned a context-aware vocabulary learning system that personalized word suggestions based on individual learning styles and available time. This aligns with the findings of Liang et al. (2021), who identified vocabulary acquisition as a core application domain within AI-powered language education (AILEd) research. These early explorations suggest that NLP can offer engaging and effective tools for vocabulary development in higher education settings.

Additionally, most studies suggest the potential of NLP for assisting reading comprehension and reading skills in diverse populations. For instance, Cerga-Pashoja et al. (2019) developed an open-source platform called OpenBook using NLP to specifically aid reading and comprehension for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). OpenBook is a personalized platform that simplifies text by identifying language obstacles, adding definitions, synonyms, images, and formatting adjustments, and includes features tailored separately for independent users and caregivers. This aligns with the work of McNamara et al. (2022), who explored how interactive NLP technologies can support comprehension by prompting students to connect textual information with their prior knowledge, fostering deeper understanding.

Minoofam et al. (2021) investigated the Reading Assistant Learning Framework (RALF). This NLP-based tool demonstrated positive impacts on dyslexic students' reading fluency (i.e., 27% improvement among Persian primary students), comprehension, and word recognition. RALF is designed to support Persian-language reading skills through audio-visual tools, adaptive text generation, and virtual pen guidance. It incorporates simplified font structures, reinforcement learning strategies for personalized content, and interactive exercises and assessments. These encouraging findings

showcase the potential of NLP to personalize reading experiences, cater to individual needs, and ultimately improve reading skills for learners across various contexts.

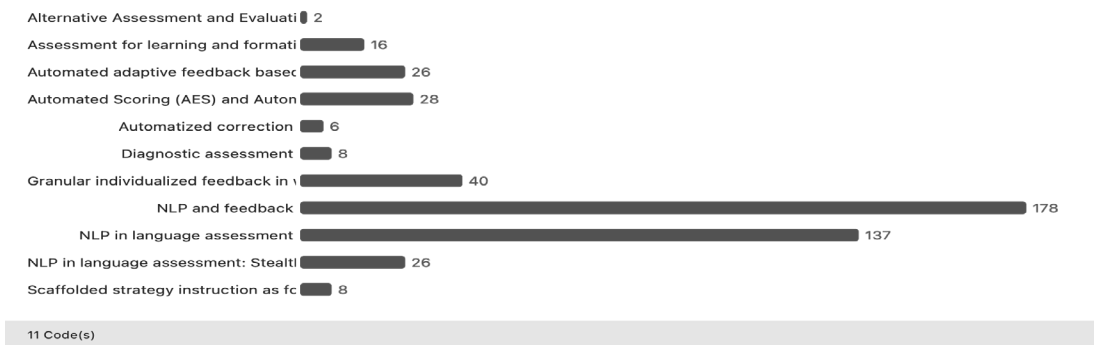
Enhancing writing skills through AI-powered assistance has also garnered attention in higher education research. Feng et al. (2016) developed CyWrite, a tool utilizing NLP to support not only testing but also the teaching and learning of second language (L2) writing. CyWrite analyzes various aspects of writing, from grammar and spelling to stylistic choices and discourse patterns, and provides targeted feedback throughout the writing process. Similarly, McNamara et al. (2022) explored the use of NLP-based algorithms for delivering personalized feedback during writing practice. For this purpose, researchers implemented the Interactive Strategy Training for Active Reading and Thinking (iSTART). This is an adaptive intelligent tutoring system designed to enhance students' comprehension of complex scientific texts in STEM. Guided by learning sciences principles, such as the generation effect, deliberate practice, and engagement strategies, iSTART delivers interactive instruction and personalized practice in literacy skill development. While these studies primarily focused on L2 writing, Miranda (2020) investigated the potential of an NLP-driven system for script writing skills in first language learners. These diverse applications suggest NLP's potential to provide personalized feedback, address specific writing challenges, and ultimately improve writing skills across various contexts and languages.

Language Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and feedback are paramount aspects of any education process, and they have been at the core focus of AI research and development (see Figure 3). In fact, (n=52) articles in this review were concerned to some extent about assessment and feedback opportunities of NLP-based AI technologies. Among the areas of interest that were identified are: granular individualized feedback in writing, Automated Essay Scoring (AES) and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE), Automated adaptive feedback based on NLP and virtual writing assistants, and stealth assessment.

Figure 3.

Prevalent Categories of NLP-based AI for Language Assessment and Feedback



One particularly exciting application involves granular individualized feedback, where feature-based models of AI provide students with detailed, personalized insights into their writing. This approach offers several advantages over traditional methods; for instance, AI can pinpoint specific errors in grammar, style, or mechanics in a matter of seconds. Students can then utilize these insights

to identify their weaknesses and target areas for improvement, fostering a more self-directed learning process (Demir, 2020). Furthermore, Vitartas et al.'s (2019) AI-powered feedback tool can be delivered promptly, allowing students to check their work iteratively before final submission. The software digitally assessed students' assignments and provided descriptive dashboard-based feedback based on categories such as word count, grammar errors, formatted references, performance scores, readability, and spelling errors, among others. The system uses content analysis with customizable evaluation criteria established by the instructors, which highlights areas of improvement. This is especially beneficial for instructors with large class sizes, as it can provide personalized feedback to all students, even when human resources are limited (Pengel et al., 2021).

According to Wambsganss et al. (2022), students have also reported positive experiences with AI feedback, appreciating the detailed analysis in structural composition, argument support, and its ability to motivate them to write more effectively. Hence, granular individualized feedback powered by AI presents a promising path for enhancing writing experiences and fostering literacy development.

AI can also be developed for Automated Essay Scoring (AES) and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE). These systems analyze student writing and provide feedback, potentially reducing workload for instructors and offering students immediate assessment. AES focuses on assigning a score or grade to an essay, like a human rater; these systems were identified in works like Tacle et al. (2020) and Chong et al. (2020). This allows for efficient grading, particularly for large writing assignments. AWE, however, expands on this by offering not just a score, but also formative feedback that helps students improve their writing. For instance, in the study of Rapp & Kauf (2018), the AWE is called: Thesis Writer. This software provided writing tutorials, phrase banks, examples, and linguistic support that accompanied students' writing of their texts.

Another significant area of interest AI offers is stealth assessment. This approach embeds assessment tasks seamlessly within learning activities, often in the form of games or simulations (McNamara et al., 2022). Students remain focused on games such as Balloon Bust, a balloon popping game where students play to demonstrate understanding; meanwhile, they are unaware that their actions and choices are being analyzed to gauge their understanding. This method not only reduces test anxiety but also allows for continuous, data-driven assessment, as presented by Rus and Ștefănescu (2016). By analyzing student interactions within the game, AI can identify areas of strength and weakness, providing valuable insights for both students and teachers. Furthermore, NLP techniques can be used to analyze student language use within the game, offering a deeper understanding of their comprehension (Allen et al., 2015).

Challenges

Most articles ($n=48$) identified several challenges of NLP-based AI in language education. For instance, several researchers faced limited performance in their systems, which indicates that there is still room for improvement. A key area demanding attention is the generation of effective assessment and feedback. Despite the potential of NLP techniques, several studies point to limitations in their ability to provide nuanced and individualized feedback. For example, one specific challenge identified by Allen et al. (2017) is the reliance on aggregate metrics to evaluate student language. Their study reveals that many assessment tools calculate factors like lexical sophistication based on averages, neglecting word distribution within the text. This approach overlooks valuable insights into the student's writing style and coherence. Nuñez and da Cunha (2022) provide another example, highlighting a

student's dissatisfaction with arText's recommendation to shorten sentences. The student perceived the suggested solution as compromising clarity and information density. This instance underscores the need for feedback that considers contextual factors and aligns with individual writing styles.

Despite the surge in AI-powered literacy tools, educational research on their impact and the presence of education in AI research lags behind. For instance, a lack of studies analyzing evidence-based chatbot-learner interaction design techniques in education, despite the growing popularity of chatbot-assisted learning. Similarly, Fu and Gu (2020) point to the limited exploration of how AI-enabled automatic scoring applications affect learning persistence and motivation. These knowledge gaps hinder our understanding of the specific mechanisms through which AI tools influence learning outcomes and student engagement. Furthermore, Demir (2020) emphasizes the difficulty of designing effective negative feedback mechanisms in educational AI software. Identifying and addressing student mistakes requires a nuanced understanding of learning processes, a challenge that highlights the need for closer collaboration between researchers and educators.

Despite impressive advancements, concerns emerge about the quality and accuracy of AI-generated language in educational contexts. Rapp and Kauf (2018) and Liu et al. (2014) highlight problems with automatic question generation, noting its dependence on the quality of the provided text and susceptibility to technical issues. Similarly, Katsarou et al. (2023) found no significant improvement in learners' speaking skills due to the simplistic nature of dialogue content in AI-powered language interactions. Perhaps more concerning is the illusion of fluency presented by models like ChatGPT. While capable of generating seemingly coherent text, this fluency often lacks the deeper logic, judgment, and creativity expected from human writers (Houston & Corrado, 2023). This raises concerns about potential misuse and the need for critical evaluation skills when encountering AI-generated language.

Future Directions

Regarding future directions ($n=44$), while AI's potential to enhance existing educational practices is evident, the future may hold more possibilities. For instance, Liang et al. (2021) urge exploring new learning paradigms and teaching strategies specifically designed for AI-powered language learning (AILED). This involves identifying ways AI can go beyond simply automating existing approaches to truly transform how to teach and learn. Similarly, Crompton and Burke (2023) call for research exploring unmapped affordances of AI in higher education. This includes investigating how AI can assist both instructors and learners, potentially revolutionizing roles and responsibilities within the educational ecosystem. In this line, research like that of Yang and Stansfield (2022) points towards integrating AI chatbots into augmented reality environments, creating richer, multi-sensory learning experiences that transcend traditional classroom settings. Katsarou et al. (2023) highlight the potential of advanced natural language processing and machine learning to create more natural and engaging Intelligent Virtual Agents (IVAs) for language learning. These agents could provide personalized feedback, facilitate interactive dialogues, and offer a more immersive learning experience.

Another crucial future direction lies in enhancing adaptability to individual users. This goes beyond tailoring generated content and interfaces to different languages but also involves dynamically adjusting the complexity and difficulty of the AI-powered interactions. Tyen et al. (2022) call for generating messages at different difficulty levels, like A1 for beginner learners, and suggest adjusting complexity through sentence structure and paraphrasing. Lippert et al. (2019) emphasize the potential of adaptive learning systems that cater to individual needs and learning styles, drawing upon AutoTutor's

ability to adjust instruction based on learner behavior and background.

Furthermore, Minoofam et al. (2021) address the linguistic challenges of representing different writing systems, particularly complex characters like Chinese, and propose innovative solutions such as using serifs to differentiate similar letters. This highlights the need for AI tools that can effectively handle the nuances of diverse languages. Yan (2023) identifies a gap in implementing advanced NLP tools for L2 writing instruction, suggesting that further research is needed to leverage these technologies for effective language learning across different languages. Additionally, Nguyen et al. (2022) point out the scarcity of multilingual NLP tools that can handle simultaneous processing of multiple languages, hindering truly bilingual interactions.

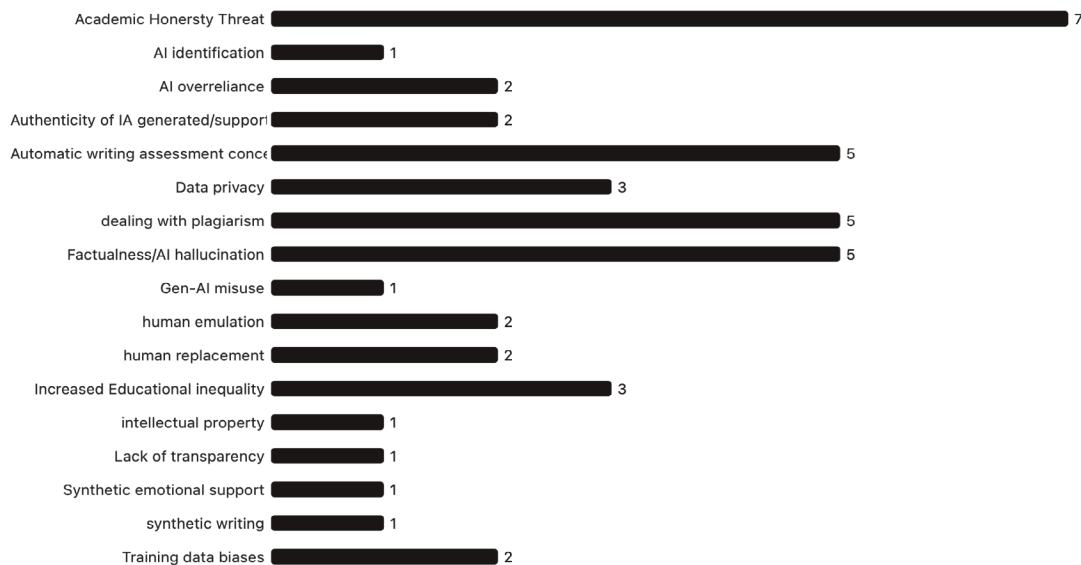
By addressing these challenges and focusing on adaptability to individual needs and languages, AI-powered literacy tools can move beyond generic approaches and deliver truly personalized and effective learning experiences for all learners, regardless of their proficiency level or native language. This will require ongoing research and development to create multilingual, adaptive systems that can cater to the diverse needs of users in a globalized learning landscape.

Ethical Considerations

While the potential benefits of AI in language instruction are undeniable, ethical concerns regarding its implementation cannot be ignored. Interestingly, only ($n=12$) documents mention ethical concerns or considerations related to the use of AI in education. Nonetheless, the documents that treat it offer significant insights into the major concerns that scholars should focus on when working with AI and having students interact directly with these technologies. The main ethical concerns, as evidenced in Figure 4, include academic honesty concerns, including issues on plagiarism, concerns on automatic writing processes, and factfulness and hallucinations in generated content.

Figure 4.

Prevalent Categories of Ethical Considerations



17 Code(s)

One of the most pressing ethical concerns surrounding AI-powered literacy tools centers on academic honesty. Studies like those by Yan (2023) highlight student anxieties about the potential for these tools to facilitate plagiarism. The ease with which AI can generate essays and other academic content raises concerns about the integrity of student work and the erosion of essential learning skills. Dergaa et al. (2023) further explore these concerns, pointing to the risk of overreliance on Generative AI Models like ChatGPT by researchers and students. This overdependence can lead to the creation of inaccurate and unoriginal work, potentially constituting plagiarism.

Another significant ethical concern involves the use of AWE systems that analyze and grade student work. Studies like Whitelock and Bektik (2018) highlight the opposition from writing professionals who fear AWE may lead students to prioritize writing for machines rather than human audiences. They argue that the social aspect of writing is crucial, and human readers can provide more nuanced feedback that fosters critical thinking and growth. In a similar line, Strobl et al. (2018) delve deeper into concerns regarding the reliability and pedagogical value of AWE systems. While efficiency is undeniable, questions arise about the accuracy of scoring engines and whether they can adequately capture the complexities of good writing. Additionally, Cotos (2015, as cited in Strobl et al., 2018) warns against using AWE solely for grading, highlighting the importance of human interaction and formative feedback. AWE systems struggle to provide the kind of scaffolding and rhetorical feedback that can truly guide students in developing their writing skills.

Another ethical concern arises from the potential for AI-powered tools to generate factual inaccuracies or hallucinations. Studies like Tyen et al. (2022) acknowledge that large language models can sometimes fabricate information during text generation. While ongoing research aims to mitigate this issue (Zhao et al., 2020; Komeili et al., 2022), it highlights the importance of user awareness. Learners must be equipped to critically evaluate the information presented by AI tools and distinguish between factual content and potential fabrications. Dergaa et al. (2023) raise a broader concern, suggesting that the impressive capabilities of NLP technology could make it difficult for even reviewers to discern fake scientific articles from genuine ones. This possibility underscores the importance of transparency and responsible development practices within the field of AI. Developers and educators alike must prioritize methods for ensuring the factual accuracy of AI-generated content and empowering users to critically evaluate the information they encounter. After all, this is a strong call for AI literacy development.

As a final note and the subsequent ethical considerations, authors like Yan (2023) suggest that unequal access to these technologies because of infrastructure or subscription fees may further increase educational inequalities since the ones with the best access and knowledge about these technologies have “enormous advantages to outperform” their peers (p. 14). Regarding data privacy, like Salas-Pilco and Yang (2022), the review does not show it as a pressing issue in most of the reviewed articles. One of the few articles was Wambsganss et al. (2022), which highlighted the risk of exposing students’ argumentation data to large tech companies and called for ways to balance accessibility with data protection.

Conclusions

This systematic review has explored the diverse applications of AI-powered NLP tools for enhancing language instruction across various higher education contexts from 2015 to 2023. It has also explored the main challenges, opportunities, and ethical concerns of such tools. NLP-based AI

technologies offer new opportunities for literacy development and assessment since they can be used to enhance literacy instruction, provide personalized feedback, identify areas of weakness, track student progress, and promote accessibility for diverse learners. As NLP techniques continue to improve and become more widely available, they will play an increasingly important role in contemporary and prospective literacy and language education.

The reviewed literature highlights the potential of various software tools to enhance language education. Intelligent Tutoring Systems like iSTART, AutoTutor, and W-Pal offer personalized instruction, (stealth) assessment, and feedback, while game-based systems like iSTART can increase student engagement and scaffold learning of challenging topics. Additionally, tools like Thesis Writer and Open Book demonstrate the potential for supporting student productions and personalizing text difficulty.

However, the findings also highlight crucial challenges and considerations for moving forward. Concerns regarding ethical implications, including academic honesty, limitations of automatic assessment, potential for AI-generated hallucinations, education inequality, and data privacy, call for careful implementation strategies. Additionally, the need for ongoing research that actively involves educators and focuses on the quality and adaptability of AI tools is of paramount importance.

There is no doubt that AI-powered tools will increasingly influence the way students develop their literacy in educational settings and the way educators approach instruction and assessment processes. Therefore, it is relevant to strengthen the merging point between educators and AI developers to better inform these systems from education theory and actual practices. In the same direction, it is increasingly important to emphasize the development of digital literacies among professors and students so that the use of these technologies is as effective, safe, and ethical as possible.

Implications and Future Directions

While the review did not identify statistically significant results for bilingualism and bilingual education (such as the processing of bilingual texts, code-switching, and biliteracy) in AI tools, we believe this is an emerging area that should be a topic of interest for further research at the merging point of AI and language education. Additionally, the data underscores the need for novel theoretical frameworks specifically designed for the educational use of AI-powered literacy tools. Furthermore, developing updated educational and language policies will be crucial to ensure the responsible and effective integration of these technologies into classrooms. The findings of this review can serve as a valuable resource for researchers and educators interested in AI-powered literacy tools. Scholars can use these to make informed decisions about the implementation and usage of tools for their educational needs and specific contexts.

Statement of originality

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

Conflicts of interest

We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare

Author Contributions

Daniel Murcia: Conceptualization, Resources, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Visualization, Software, Writing-Reviewing and Editing.

Luis Felipe Jaramillo-Calderón: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Writing-Original draft preparation.

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An Experience of Place, Inquiry, and Community-based Pedagogies for Enhancing Learning and Engagement of English Learners at a Higher Education Context

**Una Experiencia de Pedagogías de Espacio,
Indagación y Comunidad para Enriquecer el
Aprendizaje y el Compromiso de los Aprendices
de Inglés en un Contexto de Educación Superior**

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Abstract

This pedagogical experience introduces the affordances of leveraging principles from place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies to foster self-directed learning, engagement with learning, and community awareness in a group of nine higher intermediate English learners enrolled in a languages and culture higher education professional program at a highly ranked private university in Bogotá, Colombia. A learning unit was designed to guide them in exploring key places in the districts surrounding the university campus, to introduce them to inquiry processes concerning some outstanding educational sites, and to look into what they could learn from them. Using two examples from learners who granted permission to share their products and insights, the article demonstrates a consistent application of higher-order thinking skills (e.g., comparison and contrast), engagement with the themes uncovered, and heightened awareness of place and community. The project's intention was threefold: (a) to develop experiential knowledge and understanding linked to a place, (b) to enhance critical thinking and research skills via inquiry and data collection, and (c) to raise learners' awareness of community-oriented initiatives happening in the place. The guiding question that was the backbone of the project was "How does this place impact the local community as observed during fieldwork?"

Keywords: community, English learners, inquiry, learner engagement, place

Resumen

Este artículo presenta los beneficios de aprovechar los principios de pedagogías del espacio, la indagación y la comunidad para promover un aprendizaje autodirigido, compromiso con los temas descubiertos y conciencia comunitaria en un grupo de nueve estudiantes de nivel intermedio alto de inglés que pertenecen a un programa profesional de lengua y cultura en una universidad privada altamente rankeada en la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia. Se diseñó una unidad de aprendizaje para guiar a los aprendientes a explorar sitios claves en los distritos alrededor de la universidad donde estudian con el objetivo de fomentar procesos de indagación sobre algunos espacios educativos sobresalientes fuera del campus. Por medio de dos ejemplos de los trabajos de los estudiantes, el artículo muestra su uso de habilidades de pensamiento crítico (por ejemplo: comparación y contraste), compromiso con los temas indagados y mayor conciencia de elementos comunitarios o espaciales. El proyecto tuvo tres propósitos: a) desarrollar conocimiento experiencial y comprensión asociada a un lugar, b) mejorar las habilidades de pensamiento crítico e indagación a través de pesquisa y recolección de datos y c) concienciar a los estudiantes respecto de iniciativas locales orientadas a la comunidad. La pregunta columna vertebral de la unidad pedagógica fue: ¿cómo cada sitio en la comunidad la impacta de algún modo?

Palabras clave: compromiso estudiantil, comunidad, educación universitaria, espacio, estudiantes de inglés

Résumé

Cette expérience pédagogique met en évidence les potentialités qu'offre l'intégration de principes issus des pédagogies du lieu, de l'enquête et de la communauté afin de favoriser l'apprentissage autodirigé, l'engagement dans les processus d'apprentissage et le développement d'une conscience communautaire. L'étude a été menée auprès d'un groupe de neuf apprenants d'anglais de niveau intermédiaire supérieur inscrits dans un programme professionnel de langues et cultures au sein d'une université privée de premier plan à Bogotá, en Colombie. Une unité pédagogique a été conçue pour guider les étudiants dans l'exploration de lieux significatifs situés dans les quartiers avoisinant le campus universitaire. Cette unité visait à les initier à des démarches d'enquête portant sur certains espaces éducatifs remarquables et à analyser les apprentissages qu'ils pouvaient en tirer. À partir de deux exemples issus des travaux d'étudiants ayant autorisé le partage de leurs productions et de leurs réflexions, l'article met en évidence une mobilisation cohérente de compétences cognitives de haut niveau (telles que la comparaison et le contraste), un engagement soutenu envers les thématiques explorées ainsi qu'une prise de conscience accrue du rôle du lieu et de la communauté. Le projet poursuivait trois objectifs principaux : (a) développer des connaissances expérientielles et une compréhension approfondie liées à un lieu donné ; (b) renforcer les compétences en pensée critique et en recherche par le biais de démarches d'enquête et de collecte de données ; et (c) sensibiliser les apprenants aux initiatives communautaires présentes dans l'environnement étudié. La question directrice qui a structuré l'ensemble du projet était la suivante : « Comment ce lieu influence-t-il la communauté locale, tel qu'observé lors du travail de terrain ? »

Mots-clés : Engagement des apprenants, communauté, enseignement supérieur, lieu, apprenants d'anglais.

Resumo

Esse artigo apresenta os benefícios de aproveitar os princípios das pedagogias do espaço, a pesquisa e a comunidade para promover uma aprendizagem autodirigida, compromisso com os temas descobertos e a consciência de comunidade num grupo de nove estudantes do nível intermediário-alto em inglês que fazem parte dum programa profissional de Língua e Cultura numa universidade privada altamente qualificada na cidade de Bogotá na Colômbia. Foi projetada uma unidade de aprendizagem para guiar os aprendentes a explorar os lugares chave nos distritos ao redor da universidade onde eles estudam com o objetivo de promover os processos de pesquisa sobre alguns dos espaços educativos sobresalientes fora do campus. Por meio de dois exemplos dos trabalhos dos estudantes, o artigo mostra seu uso de habilidades de pensamento crítico (por exemplo: comparação e contraste), compromisso com os temas pesquisados e maior consciência de elementos comunitários espaciais. O projeto teve três propósitos: a) desenvolver conhecimento experiencial e compreensão ligada a um lugar, b) Melhorar as habilidades de pensamento crítico e indagação por meio de pesquisa e coleta de dados e c) conscientizar os estudantes em relação às iniciativas locais orientadas à comunidade. A pergunta principal da unidade Pedagógica foi: Como cada lugar na comunidade impacta ela mesma de algum jeito?

Palavras chave: compromisso estudantil, comunidade, ensino universitário, espaço, estudante de inglês.

Introduction

This pedagogical experience paper examines the affordances of integrating tenets of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies to enhance self-directed learning, higher-order thinking skills, and community engagement of students majoring in language and culture studies at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. For Summerlee (2018, p. 407), “Many of the current approaches to pedagogy in universities rely on prior, incremental acquisition of knowledge for success”. Such a perspective may be desirable within a liberal education environment but may prove incomplete for students’ development and citizenship. Although some learning may be standardized, other approaches foster fact verification, experiential learning, information evaluation, feelings of relevance, richer imagination use, and community awareness. This last element (community awareness) stems from my interest in using culturally relevant pedagogy: a view towards education in which students’ cultural elements are purposefully used in explicit systematic instruction, not only to recognize students’ uniqueness but also to make learning diverse and interesting (Taylor & Sobel, 2011).

Integrating pedagogical principles for learning rooted in place, inquiry, and community arises from my awareness that learners hardly get involved in the surrounding community environments near the university campus, which may prove to be educational in some way. For instance, it came as a surprise that my Intermediate English pupils had never stepped into the cinematheque located five minutes walking distance from the main campus where this pedagogical experience took place. Adopting a tripartite (place-inquiry-community) perspective for learning in one of the content units allowed students to self-direct their learning process while acquiring experiences, putting into practice the language skills introduced in class, and becoming more *place-aware* community members. Higher education is about becoming knowledgeable in a specific field; nonetheless, we, teachers, should not overlook that (a) most learning occurs outside the classrooms and (b) outdoor learning fosters epistemological diversity (Thomas & Munge 2022). Two characteristics that can be taken advantage of when it comes to engaging learners in higher education contexts.

There are key benefits in integrating the theoretical principles of these three pedagogical perspectives. Place-based pedagogy may bridge the gap between what happens inside classrooms and what happens outside them by piquing learners’ interest in what is behind a particular place, and the connections that can be drawn between particular cultural elements and class contents (Thomas & Munge, 2022). Likewise, inquiry-based learning caters to differences in learning and interests (Summerlee, 2018) while supporting a view of education compromised with “individuals able to contribute to their communities” (Buchanan et al., 2016, p. 25). Both place and inquiry pedagogies foster a sense of engagement, choice, and relevance when deciding which place to study in depth and which type of data is required to understand said place (Buchanan et. al., 2016; Thomas & Munge, 2022). Along the same line, community-based pedagogy advances an understanding that learners are also citizens who impact or will eventually impact the communities they participate in. In the next section, I will explore these concepts further.

Conceptual Framework

Place-based Pedagogy (PBP)

It is a pedagogical approach rooted in the tenets of experiential learning. It consists of crafting activities that involve active students' participation, discovery, and first-hand experience linked to a specific outdoor environment. Through a series of scaffolded steps, students are compelled to partake in observation, data collection, and understanding of phenomena taking place *outside* the traditional learning environment: the classroom (Thomas & Munge, 2022). It is not a secret that keeping learners' interest in higher education environments is quite challenging when learners approach more advanced English levels. Nicol and Waite (2022) maintain that outdoor learning is suited for higher education students because they can engage in self-directed learning experiences that bring joy, unexpected learning, and more lasting memories. They claim that urban sites have an impact on people's emotions and behaviors and can become learning opportunities.

For Comber (2015), the 'spatial turn' in education has allowed that place turns out to be as important in the reproduction of subjectivities as other identity markers such as class, gender, discourse, and race. This author highlights how social actors' conception of place is relational and a continuous construction that should not be idealized by assuming that people spontaneously develop a sense of belonging where they dwell, or that there is a uniform view of places.

In the case of Bogotá, which can appear as a hectic, insecure, and uninteresting city, inquiry based on place turns into an opportunity to challenge such beliefs or at least develop new understandings and problematizations. Learners may undergo a feeling of uprooting that can translate into a) a sense of exhaustion, (b) a perception of unworthiness, (c) a desire to migrate as soon as an opportunity comes, or (d) a very limited knowledge of the surroundings. These effects lead to not developing an intimate relationship with the place where they inhabit, and therefore a dearth of connection with human and non-human environments. Hence, learners might not be inhabiting the place but just residing in it. As theorized in Grunewald and Smith (2008, p. xvi), "This phenomenon of 'placelessness' is associated with alienation from others and a lack of participation in the social and political life of communities."

Community-based Pedagogy (CBP)

It aims to relate students to the places they connect with. The purpose behind this teaching approach is to foster a feeling of belonging (Popielarz & Galliher, 2023) and the discovery of ideas previously overlooked or taken for granted concerning places and people that are part of students' surroundings. This approach banks on place-based and place-conscious education. By consciously integrating CBP into lessons, teachers bring about knowledge and reflection regarding matters of local, national, or international interest, allowing learners to reflect on their roles as community members (Popielarz & Galliher, 2023).

A non-exhaustive literature review shows that local scholars have verified the gains of incorporating CBP within English lessons in varied educational settings. For instance, Quintero and Clavijo Olarte (2023, p. 4) list a wealth of benefits of CBP as follows: heightened respect towards learners' knowledge, and teacher's increased awareness of deficit perspectives in education; prospective

teachers, students, and communities' engagement, in transformation of realities; enhancement of creativity and autonomy; and the use of diverse linguistic and semiotic resources when communicating.

In the same train of thought, research by Castillo et al. (2023) explains how stimulating learners from rural and urban backgrounds to study local communities helped them reshape knowledge about those communities and learn from the cultural assets of families and community members. Another case in point is the one by Hernandez Varona & Gutiérrez Álvarez (2020), whose narrative study concluded that participating learners (student-teachers) developed agency through developing their inquiries, voicing their communities' necessities, and implementing initiatives to raise awareness towards local needs.

Similarly, Lastra et al. (2018) conducted a study at a public university with fifty-six students majoring in English teaching from different semesters and classes. The student-teachers mapped their community and became aware of the problems and assets they had in their university context. They also learned what it means to be part of the community when teaching and developing projects in their practicum experience, aiming at fostering self-esteem and parental engagement of their eighth-grade learners during the practicum experience. All in all, community-oriented teaching initiatives are based on the principle that education should have an everlasting impact on the persona and should help learners become more committed citizens.

Inquiry-based Learning (IBL)

This perspective, also arising from the principles of experiential learning, entails teachers crafting learning experiences in which students learn by doing or discovering. For Coffman (2017), students genuinely possess the motivation to discover the world. However, a teacher must get familiar with students' interests little by little so that it is easier to hook them to particular inquiries. In a similar manner, Buchanan et al. (2016) state that IBL is a constructivist and student-centered learning model by nature. They highlight that the model consists of all or some of the next elements: (1) a guiding question, (2) a genuine, situated inquiry, (3) data collection instruments creation, (4) teacher's guidance (not interference), and (5) learner's direct management of the process. With IBL, learners are expected to develop "increased intrinsic motivation; development of expertise; notable self-efficacy; task commitment; and positive attitudes about learning" (Saunders-Stewart et al., 2012, as cited in Buchanan et al., 2016, p. 27). Likewise, Summerlee (2018, p. 407) maintains:

... With inquiry-based learning, following simple steps in an analytical process, students learn not only how to process and research ideas, but appreciate how to evaluate and validate information from diverse sources—effectively they become sophisticated problem solvers in... multidisciplinary contexts.

In a similar vein, Demarest (2014) posits that the convergence of exemplary practices (in this case, place, community, and inquiry) leads to a transformative view of education that constructs learners as researchers and reality transformers, leading to more thorough and rigorous study practices. Consequently, IBL is a suitable tool when it comes to fostering the consolidation of language development of close to advanced English level learners while developing higher-order thinking abilities such as source evaluation and problem solving in varied contexts.

The Community Impact Project: A Pedagogical Intervention

The current pedagogical intervention, using tenets of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies, was first piloted in the second semester of 2023 with a former cohort of ten Intermediate English learners majoring in language and culture studies at a private university in Bogotá. Adjustments were made for the next cohort of the first semester of 2024. Results presented here belong to two learners: Ana (20) and Esteban (19), from a group of nine (five female and four male whose ages ranged between 18 and 22). Upon class observation and interaction, as a teacher, I discovered that learners' interests revolved around gastronomy, language, literature, art, historical memory, and politics. Excerpts from the two students' artefacts (videos and written reflections) are reproduced below with the learners' permission. Pseudonyms were used to preserve their identity.

Instructional Design Based on Place-Based Pedagogy

The learning experience was called “The community impact project”. For the project, the concept of community is taken from Castillo et al. (2023, p. 130), namely “groups of people that live in particular areas called territories.” One pedagogical decision was choosing a series of places in the neighborhoods surrounding the Uni's campus within a 30- or 40-minute walking distance that could eventually represent some sort of interest for learners, and that they wanted to explore in more depth. The places were intended to cater to different types of interest (e.g., gastronomy, nature, art, social service, peace and reconciliation, and languages) previously observed in learners during the first two months of the semester. This decision aligned with principles of place-based pedagogy explained by Comber (2016, p. 4), as follows: “the embodied and situated nature of students' lives is not forgotten or ignored, on the contrary, students' histories and life-worlds are understood as materials, productive resources in the design of curriculum and pedagogy.”

The study unit revolved around answering the question “*How does this place impact the local community as observed during fieldwork?*” Thus, students were encouraged to read about the place, visit it, interview stakeholders, and conclude how the place impacted the local community. The final product was a video everybody could watch and react to in the class Padlet, along with a series of written step-by-step reflections. The project's intention was threefold: (a) develop experiential knowledge and understanding linked to a place, (b) enhance critical thinking and research skills via inquiry and data collection, and (c) raise learners' awareness of community-oriented initiatives happening in the place. Table 1 best summarizes the key elements of each place:

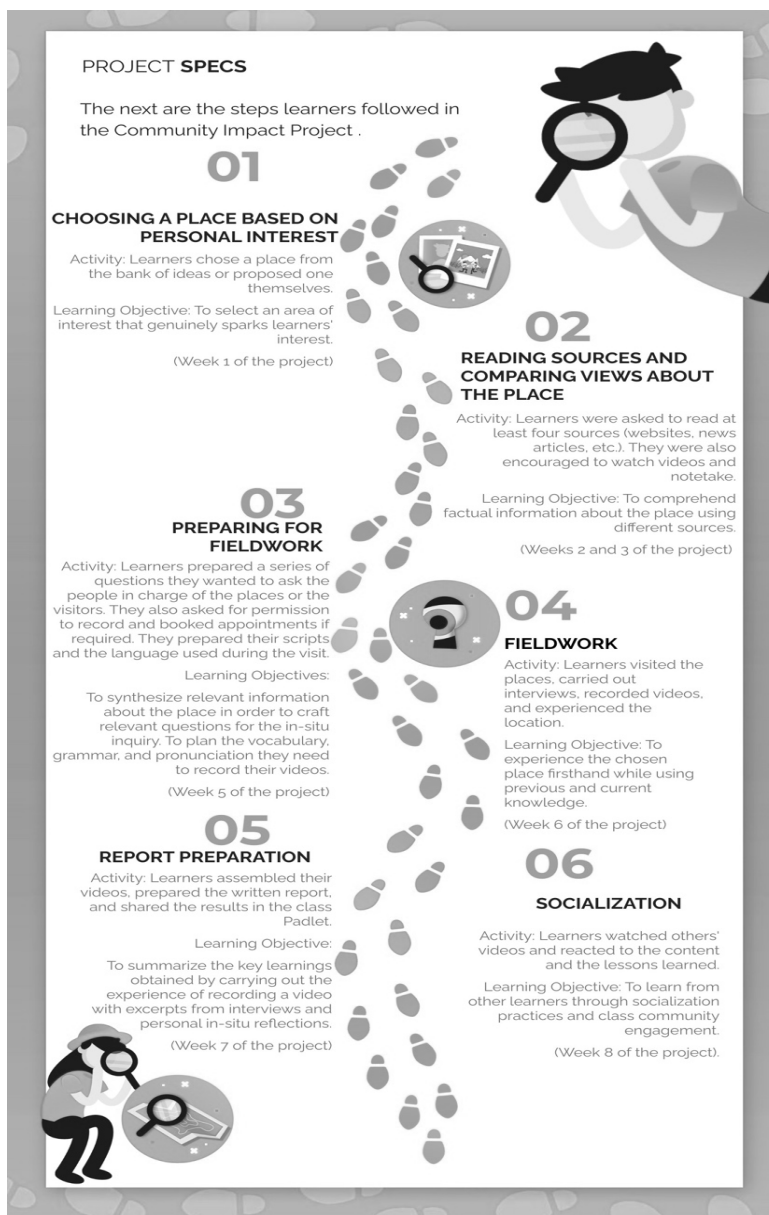
Table 1			
<i>Places to focus on for developing the Community Impact Project</i>			
Type of interest	Place	Description	Guiding Question
Gastronomy	Plaza de Mercados La Perseverancia. (La Perseverancia Food Market)	Traditional food market located in La Perseverancia neighborhood, famous for preparing some of the most popular Colombian dishes, along with selling staple foodstuffs.	How does this place impact the local community?
Languages	Instituto Caro y Cuervo (Caro & Cuervo Institute)	State-based research institute for the study of philology, literature, languages, etc.	
Art	Fragmentos: Espacio de arte y memoria (Fragments: Space of art and memory)	Place of artistic creation and reflection about the Colombian armed conflict.	
Peace & Reconciliation	Centro de Memoria Histórica (National Centre for Historical Memory)	A public institution created under the Law of Victims and Land Restitution, in charge of producing public information regarding the Colombian conflict.	
Social service	Tapas que salvan vidas (Caps that save lives)	The project is held by Sanar Foundation in charge of providing financial aid for children undergoing cancer.	
Other	Students' proposals of place-based learning experiences were also welcome.		

Project Evolution During a Bimester

Figure 1 below shows a series of steps learners followed while doing the project to develop different types of knowledge (declarative and experiential) about the chosen place. They were also expected to integrate previous class learnings in their final oral video report (i.e., comparing language, signposting language for organizing their talk, or idiomatic expressions studied in lessons). Following the inquiry process, they also developed their interview questions for the people in the chosen site (design of inquiry tools). In each part of the process, they completed a template that guided their work, considering that they were novice inquirers. In the coming section, I will share two exemplary experiences by Ana and Esteban* (not their real names) and their reactions towards carrying out the project as part of the English Intermediate III coursework.

Figure 1.

Community Impact Project Steps



Learning from Places: Ana and Esteban's Experiences

Example 1: 'Tapas que salvan vidas' (Caps that save lives) by Ana

Ana, one of the Intermediate English III learners, was characterized by being an overachiever and a committed language learner. She found it hard to socialize, though; she described herself being highly sensitive and shy. Still, she took on the challenge and got interested in understanding how a foundation (Fundación Sanar) had an impact on the community. This coursework unit might have posed a challenge for her as she had to interact with people whom she was not previously familiar with,

but in the end, she acknowledged that it was worth doing.

Within the university campus, bottle caps are collected to support projects by Fundación Sanar, but teachers and learners hardly get to know what is behind the initiative. With this choice, Ana deepened her and other students' understandings of how such a small action of depositing a cap in a recycling bin can mean the world to other people outside the uni's campus. In her written research report, she wrote¹:



The project "Tapas para sanar" that is carried out by the Fundación Sanar in Colombia, was born in 2012 with the objective of collecting funds in order to help children suffering from cancer, in this case, recycling plastic caps. Psychological assistance, food provision, socioeconomic support, and medical assistance are some of the aids children get from this foundation. (Excerpt from Ana's written report, Preparation section)

While getting ready for the fieldwork activity, which consisted of visiting the actual place they were researching, learners had to prepare a few questions they wanted to ask stakeholders involved in the project to expand their own understanding of the place and its impact on the community. Ana proposed the following questions to be answered by the staff of the foundation during fieldwork:

- What is the main objective of this foundation regarding this project?
- In which ways do you think this project makes an impact on the community?
- Are there any other things you want to do or implement in order to expand the aids and benefits the project brings?

(Questions prepared in advance for Ana's fieldwork)

Through the interview Ana conducted and shared, we as a learning community understood that to help a single child, at least 1 million caps are required to be collected. This project not only reduces our environmental impact with the strategy of recycling but also helps children. She concluded that: "small actions could bring comfort to communities that might need everybody's support". She finished her video by urging her classmates to be aware of their impact when they recycled these bottle caps.

<p>Picture 1. <i>Excerpt from Ana's Report Video</i></p>	<p>Picture 2. <i>Ana with the Project Manager and the Psychologist of the Foundation</i></p>
	

1 Excerpts are taken directly from the participants' posts in the forums or class oral participation. They may contain issues in English language accuracy or use, or the incorporation of Spanish lexical items; however, they show the way the participants express their ideas while learning the language.

After watching the video prepared by Ana in the class Padlet, a couple of classmates reacted as follows:

... Your video encouraged me to help this cause and gather *tapitas*. I like how you organized your video... and now I know how that place looks inside. The questions you did for the workers are really direct to what they want to achieve with their foundation. Having the resources for helping the kids is not easy. And now I'm more conscious of all the work they have to do for helping all those kids. (Classmate's reaction towards Ana's video)

...The fact that people can do something so minimal like recycling something like bottle caps and have an impact so big in the world gives me more faith in humanity...What I didn't know is that they needed so many just to help one child! a million is a lot and I'm thrilled of being a little help to the cause since I was a kid in school. (Classmate's reaction towards Ana's video)

In a written communication with me via email in which I asked her permission to share a few insights from her work, she commented:

I hoped that my project would raise awareness and hearts willing to join this cause, and by seeing the comments they left it seems that I accomplished that mission. (Ana's written communication with the teacher)

Example 2: Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria (Fragments: Space of Art and Memory) by Esteban

Esteban, another learner from the English Intermediate III course, fond of dance, art, and expression, decided to focus his attention on an artistic venue created by artist Doris Salcedo called "Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria". Such a choice stems from Esteban's knack for art and expression. In a former class task, he had been explaining to us the concept of "performance"; it is not surprising that he was interested in this place, then. In his written report, Esteban wrote the following after having searched for resources about the chosen place:

"Fragmentos" changes the meaning of the word "monument." Traditional monuments are often static and permanent structures. They are meant to remember specific historical events or people. In contrast, Fragmentos is interactive and can change over time. This situation invites people to participate and reinterpret its meaning. This new type of monument helps with collective healing. (Esteban's written report)

As preparation for fieldwork, Esteban not only posed questions to be asked while in the fieldwork but also thought of the objectives he wanted to pursue while doing so. In the second part of his written report, he planned the following:

Objective 1: Understand the difference of this new concept.

- What is the importance of the concept "Contra Monumento"? How could you explain it to children?

Objective 2: Evaluate whether the place is working with the victims in fields other than the arts; Coherence in their Speech: Actions vs. Words.

- Who are the principal workers here?

Objective 3: Determine if there are ways to help the victims at this place.

- How can we help the victims through this place?

(Excerpt from Esteban's fieldwork preparation stage)

Picture 3

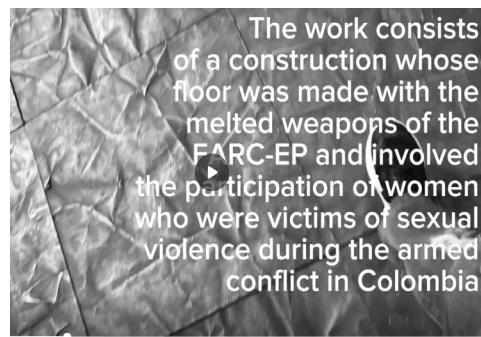
Esteban Explains the Purpose of the Place during Fieldwork



In this part of the video, Esteban explained what “counter-monument” means based on what he had read and on what he had grasped from the interview with a guide from the artistic venue. He described that this space is meant to be walked, touched, and experienced first-hand, as opposed to what happens with other artists’ pieces of art, which are only to be observed and admired.

Picture 4

Esteban Illustrates the Meaning of the Counter-Monument’s Floor



In this extract from the video, as Esteban is walking along the place, he also explains how the floor was built out of materials from the melted weapons used in the Colombian armed conflict.

After sharing the video in the class Padlet, a partner reacted as shown below:

It is a fantastic video. I really enjoyed it, because the conflict in Colombia is a topic that mustn't be forgotten. It is great that the ministry of culture, and the museum show us the conflict in a different way such as an artistic view. In addition, the role of Doris Salcedo, it is important in terms of supporting this place. For my, it was interesting the floor that is made by melted guns of FARC-EP, it's something that I've never seen. (Classmate's reaction towards Esteban's video)

After having carried out the inquiry cycle, that is, searching academic and non-academic sources of understanding, preparing the fieldwork questions, interviewing stakeholders and recording a summary video, Esteban concluded the following about “Fragmentos, Espacio de Arte y Memoria”:
From my standpoint, this is an outstanding place, I was unaware of the existence of this place. However, through my English class, I've learned about the abundance of crucial places to visit. I believe that many people are unfamiliar with this information due to factors such as the lack of promotion, misinformation, disinformation regarding entrance fees, and disinterest or apathy. In addition, this community project impacts in plenty of ways, but most importantly, it recognizes victims, transforms arms into art, and raises our awareness of Colombia's historical memory to prevent repetition. (Esteban's conclusion after having carried out the project)

Main Pedagogical Insights from the Project

Having designed and carried out this pedagogical initiative, I concur with Demarest (2014) when stating that teachers who get involved in finding more creative ways to engage students in learning will enhance more pleasing learning experiences. If places are socially constructed texts (Comber, 2016), the fact of engaging learners with them means opening spaces for deeper meaning-making practices that are sometimes scarce within the boundaries of classrooms. As a teacher engaged with social transformation, I think having students get involved with places within their community may develop a sensibility that cannot be gained just via class activities. Mixing key principles of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies brings about many positive outcomes in an English class environment for students majoring in languages and culture. They are in a language stage in which they can also self-direct their process; therefore, designing lessons in which higher-order thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, evaluating and comparing sources, or analyzing viewpoints can be more easily nurtured.

As a teacher, I particularly observed: (1) more connections between concepts, (2) heightened awareness of social issues (e.g., the real impact that recycling can have or the importance of art in healing victims of the armed conflict), (3) more informed decisions about learners' projects (e.g., posing objectives for their fieldwork), (4) more use of expressions learned in class, and (5) more confidence while speaking in English, while introducing signposting language and using language structures studied in lessons.

Following Feldt and Peterson (2021), IBL is organized in a way that looks like a research process. Hence, when it comes to developing it within the boundaries of the English lessons, we teachers should understand that learners are still amateur researchers who need guidance and compassion while in the process. The English class is not a research course *per se*; thus, perfect research outcomes are not expected; what is necessary, though, is that with some degree of guidance, learners can achieve their own learning outcomes based on the experiential learning approach.

Similarly, using place and community-based perspectives allows teachers to develop more creative, tailored, and compelling learning experiences. There is room for students to direct their own learning experience and develop a sense of classroom community because they get engaged with others' own inquiries as well. Undoubtedly, there is also a heightened understanding of the place they inhabit and a greater sensitivity towards what is going on in the city.

Statement of originality

I declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

Conflicts of interest

I do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

Author Contributions

Adriana Castañeda Londoño: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Discourses around Bilingualism and Bilingual Education in the Local Policy Context of Public Education in Quindío, Colombia

Discursos en Torno al Bilingüismo y la Educación Bilingüe en el Contexto Político Local de la Educación Pública en Quindío, Colombia

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Abstract

Public bilingual education in Quindío is often lauded as exemplary in Colombia. However, a critical examination of the criteria underlying such commendations reveals a complex linguistic, political, discursive, and ideological landscape in which the terms “bilingual education” and “bilingualism” warrant discussion, given the sociocultural context in the country and the evolution of sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and language teaching. This article proposes a Critical Discourse Analysis of various trends in bilingual education in Quindío, with a particular focus on how bilingualism has been understood within the department’s educational policies. Using documentary analysis (Bowen, 2009), we analyze and discuss the different conceptions of bilingualism and bilingual education contained in public educational documents such as departmental and municipal bilingualism projects, Institutional Educational Projects, curricula, and area plans of some traditional public schools in the department during the last two decades. The study demonstrates how deeply ingrained language ideologies influence the discourses found in local official educational documents and the foreign language teaching practices in public schools. Nonetheless, the analysis of recent documents also shows a different view of multilingualism, understood from more plural perspectives that include other languages present in the local educational landscape, such as French and Colombian Sign Language, among others, often neglected by monoglossic ideologies that tend to privilege exclusively English teaching and learning in Quindío’s public schools. This article aims to advance the current understanding of bilingualism and language education in the region.

Keywords: Bilingualism, bilingual education, CDA, language ideologies, monoglossic ideologies, multilingualism

Resumen

La educación pública bilingüe en el Quindío es frecuentemente elogiada como ejemplar en Colombia. Sin embargo, un examen crítico de los criterios que subyacen a tales elogios revela un panorama lingüístico, político, discursivo e ideológico en el que los términos «educación bilingüe» y «bilingüismo» merecen ser discutidos, dados los fenómenos socioculturales del país y la evolución de la sociolingüística, la lingüística aplicada y la enseñanza de lenguas. Este artículo propone un Análisis Crítico del Discurso de las diferentes tendencias de la educación bilingüe en el Quindío, prestando especial atención a cómo se ha entendido el bilingüismo en las políticas educativas del departamento. Utilizando el análisis documental (Bowen, 2009), este artículo analiza y discute las diferentes concepciones de bilingüismo y educación bilingüe contenidas en documentos educativos públicos como proyectos departamentales y municipales de bilingüismo, Proyectos Educativos Institucionales, planes de estudio y planes de área de algunos colegios públicos tradicionales del departamento durante las últimas dos décadas; así mismo, demuestra cómo las ideologías lingüísticas influyen en los discursos que se encuentran en los documentos educativos oficiales y en las prácticas de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en las escuelas públicas locales. Sin embargo, el análisis de documentos recientes también muestra una visión diferente del multilingüismo, entendido desde perspectivas más plurales que incluyen otras lenguas presentes en el panorama educativo local, como el francés y las lenguas de señas, entre otras, a menudo desatendidas por ideologías monoglósicas que tienden a privilegiar exclusivamente la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés en las escuelas públicas del Quindío. Este artículo busca avanzar en la comprensión actual del bilingüismo y la educación bilingüe en la región.

Palabras clave: Bilingüismo, educación bilingüe, ACD, ideologías lingüísticas, ideologías monoglósicas, multilingüismo

Résumé

L'enseignement public bilingue dans le Quindío est souvent salué comme exemplaire en Colombie. Cependant, un examen critique des critères qui sous-tendent ces éloges révèle un panorama linguistique, politique, discursif et idéologique dans lequel les termes « éducation bilingue » et « bilinguisme » doivent être discutés, compte tenu des phénomènes socioculturels du pays et de l'évolution de la sociolinguistique, de la linguistique appliquée et de l'enseignement des langues. Cet article propose une analyse critique du discours des différentes tendances de l'éducation bilingue dans le Quindío, accordant une attention particulière à la manière laquelle le bilinguisme a été compris dans les politiques éducatives du département. À partir d'une analyse documentaire (Bowen, 2009), cet article examine et discute les différentes conceptions du bilinguisme et de l'éducation bilingue contenues dans les documents éducatifs publics tels que les projets départementaux et municipaux sur le bilinguisme, les projets éducatifs institutionnels, les programmes d'études et les programmes régionaux de certaines écoles projets éducatifs institutionnels, programmes d'études et plans régionaux de certaines écoles publiques traditionnelles du département au cours des deux dernières décennies. Il montre également comment les idéologies linguistiques influencent les discours que l'on trouve dans les documents éducatifs officiels et dans les pratiques d'enseignement des langues étrangères dans les écoles publiques locales. Cependant, l'analyse de documents récents montre également une vision différente du multilinguisme, compris dans une perspective plus plurielle qui inclut d'autres langues présentes dans le paysage éducatif local, telles que le français et les langues des signes, entre autres, souvent négligées par les idéologies monoglossiques qui ont tendance à privilégier exclusivement l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'anglais dans les écoles publiques du Quindío. Cet article vise à faire progresser la compréhension actuelle du bilinguisme et de l'éducation bilingue dans la région.

Mots clés : Bilinguisme, éducation bilingue, ACD, idéologies linguistiques, idéologies monolingues, multilinguisme

Resumo

A educação pública bilíngue no Quindio é frequentemente reconhecida como exemplar na Colômbia. Todavia, um exame crítico dos critérios que subjazem aos elogios revela um panorama linguístico, político, discursivo e ideológico no qual os termos (educação bilíngue (bilinguismo) merecem ser discutidos, tendo na conta os fenômenos socioculturais do país e a evolução da sociolinguística, a linguística aplicada e o ensino das línguas. Esse artigo propõe uma análise crítica do discurso das diferentes tendências da educação bilíngue no Quindio, dando ênfase a como o conceito de bilinguismo tem sido entendido nas políticas educacionais do estado. Usando a análise documental (Bowen, 2009) Esse artigo analisa e discute as diferentes concepções do bilinguismo e educação bilíngue contidas nos documentos educativos públicos como projetos de bilinguismo por estado e por cidade, projetos educativos institucionais, planos de estudo, e planos de área de algumas escolas públicas tradicionais do estado durante as últimas duas décadas. Além disso, demonstra como as ideologias linguísticas influem nos discursos que estão nos documentos educativos oficiais e as práticas do ensino das línguas estrangeiras nas escolas públicas locais. No entanto, o análise de documentos recentes também mostra uma visão diferente do multilinguismo, compreendido desde perspectivas mais plurais que incluem outras línguas presentes no panorama educativo local, como o francês é a língua de sinais, entre outras, frequentemente desatendidas pelas ideologias monoglossicas que dão privilégio exclusivo a ensino e aprendizagem do inglês nas escolas públicas do Quindio. Esse artigo procura avançar na compreensão atual do bilinguismo e a educação bilíngue na região.

Palavras chave: Bilinguismo, educação bilíngue, ACD, ideologias linguísticas, ideologias monoglossicas, multilinguismo.

Introduction

Over the last years, public bilingual education in Quindío has garnered considerable attention from various local and official governmental media, and it is often lauded as exemplary within the country (El Espectador, 2023; El Quindiano, 2019; Gobernación del Quindío, 2018). However, a critical examination of the criteria underlying such commendations reveals a linguistic, political, and discursive landscape in which a complex reality is evident in the educational context.

It is a fact that in such a diverse country as Colombia, with different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic communities, where economic inequalities prevail, the term bilingualism has usually brought to the fore the possibility of making viable the dominance of a foreign language – English in this case-, by students in state schools. However, despite changes or transformations throughout time, neoliberal ideologies are still present, overshadowing the bilingualism of ethnic communities in their vernacular or indigenous languages or the presence of other ‘more prestigious’ languages (Miranda et al., 2023; Miranda, 2016; Usma, 2015).

Considering the present situation, the possibility of a bilingual society remains unavailable for the vast majority, a fact highlighted in the official policy documents on bilingualism, documents that privilege English as ‘the’ language that people, and in this case, students in state or public schools, should learn or ‘master’, reinforcing the idea of two bilingualisms, a ‘visible’ and an ‘invisible’ bilingualism, as De Mejía (2011) has stated, a position, very much in line with what Pennycook (2017) has referred to as discourses about the spread of English worldwide, often embodying a positive image of English, as a new commodity on the educational market, or as Usma (2009) has argued, the instrumentalization of English. Nevertheless, although this position has received criticism, these discourses seem to remain unchanged in the national and local policy documents, directly influencing classroom practices.

The impact of national bilingual policies has been documented for many years in different regions of Colombia (Cárdenas & Miranda, 2014; Cardona et al., 2023). It is clear from the literature that there are considerable limitations to the implementation of such policies in aspects that range from conceptual limitations of bilingualism to issues related to logistical restrictions like the lack of human resources, materials, and connectivity, among others (Aponte, 2024). Despite all the claims from academia about the weaknesses of the policies and a possible consensus on the ways to improve their conceptualization and execution (Guerrero, 2008, 2010a), every change of national government has come with a continuity of the policies, making only superficial adjustments (Guerrero, 2010a).

This article proposes a critical analysis (Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 1995; 2003; Gee, 2005; Wodak, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2015) of the discourse around bilingual education in Quindío, paying particular attention to how bilingualism has been understood in the department’s educational policies¹. To achieve this purpose, through a documentary analysis (Bowen, 2009), this article examines the different conceptions of bilingualism and bilingual education contained in public educational documents such as departmental and municipal bilingualism projects, Institutional Educational Projects –PEI-², curricula, subject plans, and course plans of some traditional public schools in the department during the last two decades. It is expected that this article will contribute to the state of the

1 This study mentions Quindío, generically, including Armenia, its capital city. Nonetheless, we clarify that the department of Quindío, and Armenia, has different boards of education, which are autonomous in their decisions, planning, and application of national education policies. However, in both cases, the promotion of ‘bilingualism’ –understood as English learning and teaching- has been one of the main goals of local policies, especially during the last two decades.

2 Acronym in Spanish of *Proyecto Educativo Institucional*.

art of bilingualism and language education in the region, inform about the evolution of what is known to date as bilingual education in Quindío, and serve as a starting point for future critical studies in the area. Thus, the following general question guides this analysis: How have official and social discourses on bilingualism and bilingual education in the department of Quindío evolved over the last twenty years, and how have these discourses influenced local educational policies, pedagogical practices, and notions of bilingualism in the region?

Theoretical Framework

Colombia is a multiethnic and multilingual nation (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991) where approximately 67 local -aboriginal and creole- languages coexist alongside Spanish -the official language-, Colombian Sign Language, and various foreign languages introduced through migration and educational policies, such as French, German, and Portuguese, among others (Miranda et al., 2023). Despite this diverse linguistic landscape, public discourses and media representations in Colombia often equate bilingualism narrowly with the Spanish English binary (De Mejía, 2006; Miranda & Valencia Giraldo, 2023). This dominant association has its roots in longstanding national linguistic policies influenced by neoliberal ideologies, which have positioned English as the language of economic competitiveness and globalization and the key to success (Guerrero, 2008).

These discourses and representations surrounding bilingualism in Colombia have also shaped the language ideologies that frame bilingual education in the country, which has historically prioritized English language teaching, frequently at the expense of the recognition and promotion of minority local languages, cultures, and identities (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; De Mejía, 2011; Miranda & Valencia Giraldo, 2023; Vargas et al., 2008). As a result, English has occupied a privileged position in the country's language education agendas and budgets, leading to the adoption of foreign frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to guide language instruction in public schools. This has granted organizations such as the British Council a central role in shaping national language policies (De Mejía, 2011; González, 2007; Usma, 2009), while sidelining the voices of national scholars and minority groups in the development of inclusive language education models.

In response, contemporary trends in language education and research, particularly those informed by intercultural, decolonial, and critical perspectives, have begun to challenge these reductive views (Heller, 2007; Miranda et al., 2023). Such emerging approaches advocate for a broader, more inclusive understanding of multilingualism, one that genuinely values and integrates the diverse linguistic and cultural realities of the Colombian context. Accordingly, current critical studies in the field in Colombia examine how bilingualism and bilingual education are defined, legitimized, and contested in public education and official discourses (Miranda et al., 2023; Usma, 2015).

Through this lens, this article adopts an intercultural and critical perspective on bilingualism. It begins by recognizing Colombia's complex cultural and linguistic landscape, where bilingualism is not merely a matter of individual language proficiency, but rather a contextually situated phenomenon involving the dynamic interplay of multiple local and foreign languages within intercultural communication and educational settings (De Mejía, 2006; Miranda et al., 2023; Usma, 2015). From this vantage point and recognizing the multiple nature of the diverse Colombian linguistic and cultural landscape, we approach bilingualism just as one possible facet of multilingualism, especially in the

context of public education, where institutions must include the teaching of at least one foreign language in their curricula. Thus, multilingualism is understood as the interaction among diverse linguistic and cultural resources that shape communication and discourse in different sociohistorical contexts.

Moreover, grounded in a critical sociolinguistic perspective, this analysis conceptualizes bilingualism as both ideology and practice (Heller, 2007). That is, it views the use, value, regulation, and promotion of languages as deeply embedded in broader social, political, and ideological processes. In the same way, bilingual education is assumed as a place either for the reproduction or contestation of these ideologies, even in the teaching and learning of English. This approach challenges neutral or technical understandings of bilingualism by interrogating the nexus between political and institutional forces in the construction and understanding of language policies and practices. In doing so, the article aims to uncover the discourses surrounding bilingualism and bilingual education in official documents from various public schools in Quindío, one of the first Colombian departments that started to implement immersive bilingual education initiatives in public schools.

Methodology

This article employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the discourses surrounding bilingualism and bilingual education within public education policies contained in official documents in Quindío and its capital city, Armenia, over the past two decades. In line with the research question, the analysis focuses on how the notions of bilingualism and bilingual education have been constructed in both historical and contemporary policy documents. These include the Integral Bilingualism Plan of the Department of Quindío (2017), the English Subject Municipal Plan of Armenia –PAMI-³ (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012), as well as various public schools' PEIs, subject plans, and other official documents produced during the years 2008 to 2024 by Gobernación del Quindío, Alcaldía de Armenia and several local public educational institutions.

Emerging from various disciplines such as rhetoric, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy, among others, CDA can be understood as both a social science field (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2003; Gee, 2005; Wodak, 2014) and a research method (Bryman, 2012). Its primary purpose is to uncover how discourse -language in use- constructs or frames people's understanding of the world, emphasizing the power relations that operate behind or beyond words and structure institutional practices (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2005; Wodak, 2014). As Wodak (2014) explains, all CDA approaches share a problem-oriented nature, aiming to “demystify ideologies and power through the systematic investigation of written, spoken, or visual data” (p. 303). This allows CDA to analyze, for instance, how certain discourses dominate during specific historical periods and how these discourses evolve, change, persist, and are reproduced within society. Furthermore, CDA critically examines whose interests benefit from the prevalence of discourses.

It is then possible to critically approach the discourse that frames a phenomenon from a synchronic or diachronic perspective. If the analyst chooses to study discourse from a synchronic perspective, the focus will be languages sociocultural “situatedness” and how it operates within current power dynamics. On the other hand, from a more diachronic perspective, the focus of analysis will be the change, persistence, or evolution of certain discourses throughout a given period. Discourse

3 By its acronym in Spanish of *Plan de Área Municipal de Inglés*.

analysts may also study language in different modes, media, and genres. Thus, print or spoken language, interviews, political speeches, books, articles, laws, or policy documents may be the object of CDA. It all depends on the analyst's purpose and the data available for the analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2005; Wodak, 2014). CDA has been extensively used in contemporary educational research for various purposes. It has proven helpful in describing and explaining the relationships among language in use, power, ideology, and institutionality within different educational settings and contexts. In this way, CDA is often used in the analysis of curricula and textbooks, classroom interaction, policy formulation and implementation, and foreign language education, among others.

To address the research question, documents will be analyzed from a diachronic perspective, focusing on how the conceptualization of bilingualism persists or changes in local policy and official school documents over the past two decades, paying particular attention to (a) intertextuality and (b) interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2001, 2003). In this context, intertextuality refers to how documents relate to similar ones—i.e., national educational policy documents—. At the same time, interdiscursivity examines how the discourses within the documents relate to other discourses and how they influence social practices. Following Fairclough's (2003) framework, we analyze documents as elements of social events with causal effects and the potential to shape people's knowledge, ideologies, beliefs, and assumptions, ultimately leading to changes in social practices such as language teaching.

To select the contents and operationalize the analysis, we adopted Documentary Analysis (Bowen, 2009), a process involving several steps. First, a guiding research question was formulated to direct the inquiry. Next, as researchers, we familiarized ourselves with the context within which the documents were produced. A sample of twenty-one documents was thoroughly read and discussed to understand the content better. Content analysis was subsequently carried out to identify the key categories guiding the initial discourse analysis. During this process, special attention was paid to intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2003).

Based on the initial findings, additional documents were included to compare how terms such as bilingualism and bilingual education have evolved in local educational policy documents over the years. The analysis focused on examining changes in the PEIs, subject plans, and institutional bilingualism projects across different periods. The final corpus for the analysis consisted of twenty-three official documents obtained from the Boards of Education's files, institutional websites, and principals' and school teachers' personal files, among others. These documents were classified as follows: 1) Local Policy Documents, 2) Departmental and Municipal Boards of Education's and Schools' Official Documents, and 3) Schools' Language Planning Documents (See Table 1 below). The documents corresponding to each group were later subcategorized according to date and current validity and classified as current and past documents (See Table 2 below).

Table 1 <i>Classification of Documents</i>		
1) Local Policy Documents	2) Departmental and Municipal Boards of Education's and Schools' Official Documents	3) Schools' Language Planning Documents
Gobernación del Quindío (2017). Implementación del programa integral de bilingüismo “Quindío bilingüe y competitivo” en el departamento del Quindío. (SED)	IE CASD (2016). Bilingual pilot project “English learning for living”. (Armenia)	IE Ciudad Armenia (2010). Plan de área de inglés. (Armenia)
Gobernación del Quindío (2019) Proyecto de ordenanza por medio de la cual se establece la política pública departamental de multilingüismo como parte de la oferta educativa de las instituciones educativas oficiales adscritas al departamento del Quindío. (SED)	IE Enrique Olaya Herrera (2011). Horizonte Institucional. (Armenia)	IE Ciudadela del sur (2010). Plan de área de inglés. (Armenia)
Alcaldía de Armenia (2019). Mapa de bilingüismo. (SEM)	IE CASD (2013). Proyecto de Bilingüismo CASD 2013-2020. (Armenia)	IE Ciudadela del sur (2009). Plan Área 2009. (Armenia)
Alcaldía de Armenia (2024). Circular No 69. Orientaciones para el fortalecimiento de proyectos de bilingüismo y/o plurilingüismo de las diferentes instituciones educativas oficiales de Armenia. (SEM)	IE Ciudadela del sur (2012). Presentación de la asignatura idioma extranjero inglés. (Armenia)	IE. Enrique Olaya Herrera (2012). Plan de asignatura 2012. (Armenia)
Alcaldía de Armenia (2012) Plan de Área Municipal de Inglés, PAMI. (SEM)	Alcaldía de Armenia (2024). Estrategia de acompañamiento educativo territorio SCHOLA, Armenia 2024-2027.	IE Ciudadela de occidente (2011). Plan de área de preescolar a undécimo. (Armenia)
Alcaldía de Armenia (2013). Consolidado de proyectos de bilingüismo 2013. (SEM)	Alcaldía de Armenia (2024). Criterios para registro y aprobación de la oferta de la educación media técnica y/o académica en el municipio de Armenia (En la IE Enrique Olaya Herrera).	IE Santa María Goretti (2023). Plan de área. (Montenegro)

Alcaldía de Armenia (2014). Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera Inglés. Portafolio PMCLE. Secretaría de Educación Armenia. Ppt (SEM)	IE Santa María Goretti (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional. (Montenegro)	IE Santa María Goretti (2023). Plan de aula. (Montenegro)
Alcaldía de Armenia (2012). Presentación estado actual de bilingüismo junio de 2012. Ppt (SEM)	IE Policarpa Salavarrieta (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional. (Quimbaya)	IE Policarpa Salavarrieta (2024). Plan de área de inglés. (Quimbaya)
	IE Enrique Olaya Herrera. (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional. (Armenia)	I.E Enrique Olaya Herrera. (2023). Plan de área de inglés. (Armenia)
	IE Normal Superior del Quindío (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional. (Armenia)	IE Normal Superior del Quindío (2023). Plan de área de inglés. (Armenia)
	IE CASD. Proyecto de Bilingüismo CASD 2013-2026. (Armenia)	IE Rafael Uribe Uribe (2024). Plan de Área de Inglés.
	IE Santa María Goretti. Proyecto de Bilingüismo. (Montenegro)	
	IE Rafael Uribe Uribe (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.	

Table 2. <i>Subcategorization according to Date and Validity</i>	
A. Past	B. Current
Alcaldía de Armenia (2013). Consolidado de proyectos de bilingüismo 2013.	Gobernación del Quindío (2017). Implementación del programa integral de bilingüismo “Quindío bilingüe y competitivo” en el departamento del Quindío.
Alcaldía de Armenia (2014). Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera Inglés. Portafolio PMCLE. Secretaría de Educación Armenia.	Gobernación del Quindío (2021). Proyecto de ordenanza por medio de la cual se establece la política pública departamental de multilingüismo como parte de la oferta educativa de las instituciones educativas oficiales adscritas al departamento del Quindío.
Alcaldía de Armenia (2012). Presentación estado actual de bilingüismo junio de 2012.ppt	Alcaldía de Armenia (2019). Mapa de bilingüismo.

IE CASD (2016). Bilingual pilot project “English learning for living”.	Alcaldía de Armenia (2024). Circular No 69. Orientaciones para el fortalecimiento de proyectos de bilingüismo y/o plurilingüismo de las educativas oficiales de Armenia.
IE Enrique Olaya Herrera (2011). Horizonte Institucional.	Alcaldía de Armenia (2012) Plan de Área Municipal de Inglés, PAMI.
IE CASD (2013). Proyecto de Bilingüismo CASD 2013-2020	IE Santa María Goretti (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Ciudadela del sur (2012). Presentación de la asignatura idioma extranjero inglés.	IE Policarpa Salavarrieta (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Ciudad Armenia (2008). Plan de área de inglés.	IE Enrique Olaya Herrera. (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Ciudadela del sur (2010). Plan de área de inglés.	IE Normal Superior del Quindío (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Ciudadela del sur (2009). Plan área 2009.	IE Santa María Goretti (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Enrique Olaya Herrera (2012). Plan de asignatura 2012.	IE Policarpa Salavarrieta (2024). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
IE Rafael Uribe Uribe (2024). Plan de Área de Inglés.	IE Enrique Olaya Herrera. (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
	IE Normal Superior del Quindío (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
	IE Rafael Uribe Uribe (2023). Proyecto Educativo Institucional.
	IE CASD (2013). Proyecto de Bilingüismo CASD 2013-2026.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the main findings derived from the analysis of official documents and policies related to bilingual education in the department of Quindío over the last two decades. The analysis is organized into interconnected categories that reflect the historical development, ideological underpinnings, and current orientations of bilingual policies in the region. The categories emerge as common themes in the texts and as a token of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2001, 2003) within these documents at the national and regional levels.

Evolution of the “Bilingual” Policy in the Department of Quindío in the First Decade of the 2000s

During the first decade of the 2000s, several bilingual education initiatives emerged in the Department of Quindío’s public schools as the local economy transitioned from coffee and agriculture

to tourism and as the internet started to spread and develop worldwide. Tourism and technology quickly became the rationale for positioning 'being bilingual' as an essential skill for participating in the regional and world economies. At the time, some traditional public schools in the department started to offer high school vocational tracks (*medias académicas o técnicas*) on techno-bilingualism, as part of the official policy being implemented. These schools included changes in the curricula during the upper high school grades (10th and 11th), emphasizing informatics and English.

The purpose of this was either to prepare students for the emerging tourism market in the region, which was supposed to attract hundreds of foreign visitors and investors to Quindío shortly, or to get students acquainted with the contents of professional or technical programs in informatics, languages -English- or tourist administration.

Emerging “Bilingualism” Pilot Programs

By the late 2000s, several public schools in the department of Quindío and its capital, Armenia, had launched pilot programs in “bilingualism”. These initiatives involved increasing the hours allocated to English instruction from primary through secondary school in some institutions, while others implemented Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), teaching content subjects in English. These pilot programs were methodologically guided and advised by private elite bilingual schools and local organizations within the department.

Around 2008 and 2010, for instance, two pilot programs in “bilingualism” were set in motion in the municipalities of Quimbaya and Montenegro. In 2012, the Municipal English Subject Plan –PAMI– was launched as a pioneering initiative spearheaded by the Board of Education of Armenia –SEM– in collaboration with a group of English teachers from different schools in the city. This document aimed to establish a unified framework for English language education across public schools in the city, from first to eleventh grade. The PAMI attempted to provide clear guidelines and an integrated syllabus to ensure coherence and consistency in the content taught at each educational level in Armenia. By doing so, anchored in national educational and language policies, it aimed to bridge educational gaps and create unity in the teaching and learning of English as a second language within the public school system.

However, in Colombia, it is common for schools to maintain autonomy in curriculum development despite ongoing efforts to standardize educational content. For this reason, initiatives such as the PAMI often coexist with and contribute to each school’s unique institutional language planning. Every school is expected to create its own subject and course plans, shaped by its specific pedagogical approaches and the framework of its PEIs. Consequently, besides the PAMI, the English subject and course plans of different institutions were also analyzed.

The Integral Bilingualism Program Quindío Bilingüe y Competitivo

Another local policy document that informs “bilingual” education in the department of Quindío is the *Programa Integral de Bilingüismo “Quindío Bilingüe y Competitivo”* (2017). The Integral Bilingualism Program was launched as part of the development plan of the government of Quindío during the period 2016-2019, with the purpose of:

Implementing in the department the National Bilingual Colombia Program through training, monitoring of learning processes, applying and advocating for continuous improvement to promote the advancement of educational quality standards in the department and make Quindío a

pioneer in bilingualism in educational institutions in the public sector (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017, p. 4; AT⁴).

The document is intertextually and interdiscursively related to Colombian national policies, mainly to the National Bilingual Program –NBP-. As evidenced in its theoretical framework and other sections of the document, the understanding of bilingualism as English learning and teaching, among other monoglossic ideologies linked to this conception, predominates in the text, as in the NBP. For instance, the Integral Bilingualism Program states that “Colombian students live in a world that requires them to communicate more in English every day, to interact with citizens of other countries and to access knowledge through this language” (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017, p. 22; AT). Besides, the program purports that competency in English will enable public school students to access the global labor market and secure improved employment opportunities. (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017).

As Guerrero (2008) holds, referring to the NBP and the Basic Competence Standards in Foreign Languages: English (MEN, 2006), “bilingualism is based on a set of myths” (p. 31), and one of those myths could be the pervasive promise that English is the key to economic success and access to the global economic and academic market. Additionally, based on Guerrero (2008), the analysis of the document shows that, like the English standards, the Integral Bilingualism Program of Quindío was designed with an idealized group of students in mind, which significantly differs from the actual student population in Quindío, who typically come from predominantly monolingual backgrounds and lower economic strata, despite the influence of tourism in some towns. This mismatch between the envisioned and real learners, along with the ambitious goals of the plan, raises concerns about the program’s effectiveness and cultural relevance in addressing the specific needs of public-school students in Quindío, especially given the substantial public budget invested in the project. This has also drawn criticism from political actors in the region and local media: “From the get-go, the project was not correctly planned; if so, you can never expect successful results” (La Crónica, 2018; AT).

Draft Law of Bilingual Education

In 2021, the government office of Quindío proposed a draft law to regulate bilingual public education in the department. This document was also based on NBP’s objectives. Its main objective was to improve the English proficiency of both teachers and students. Many details set this document apart from previous intentions. First, the term multilingualism is introduced in the draft of the law, marking a distance from bilingualism or plurilingualism, and it is the concept that is supposed to guide the decisions to be made regarding learning languages, English in this case (Gobernación del Quindío, 2021). Despite the use of the concept, there is still the issue of conflating it with learning foreign languages, disregarding the role of Spanish and other languages in the region:

The purpose of the Departmental Public Policy on Multilingualism is aligned with the guidelines established in the National Bilingualism Program and other related and complementary national regulations, in order to guide the official education sector towards the vision of strengthening of a foreign language, English, for public school teachers in Quindío, as well as for students in public institutions (Gobernación del Quindío, 2021, p. 1; AT).

4 AT: Authors’ Translation. All translations from the documents in Spanish are the authors’ own (AT), unless otherwise indicated.

Second, it is the first official document in the region proposing a firm intention and legal rationale to invest taxpayers' money to achieve bilingual objectives derived from a national program. There is an elaborate list of all related bills (intertextual links) to support it, from the Constitution to legal regulations to assign an appropriate budget to these kinds of programs.

A Shared Restrictive View on Bilingualism

The analysis of official regional documents such as the PAMI, PEIs, departmental bilingual programs, and other related documents also reveals direct intertextual links with key national education policies, such as Law 115 of 1994, the curricular guidelines, and the Basic Competence Standards of English (MEN, 2006). This connection ensures that the goals articulated in the documents are not only locally relevant but also aligned with broader national educational objectives. Furthermore, in the case of the PAMI (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012), the document was organized into several sections that included “suggestions for teaching and learning practices,” outlined a “teacher’s profile,” and provided detailed plans with suggested content for primary, secondary, and high school education, among others.

Overall, the documents reflect persistent trends in the discourse surrounding bilingualism in Armenia and Quindío over the past two decades. A prevailing theme is the utilitarian and exclusionary conception of bilingualism, wherein “being bilingual” is largely construed as the addition of English to Spanish to enhance competitiveness in a globalized world. This perspective is evident, for instance, in the PAMI, which states:

Following the implementation of strategic aims of the National Bilingualism Plan, and as part of the Municipal Bilingualism Program framed within the 2012–2015 Municipal Development Plan, ‘Armenia, a Paradise to Invest, Live, and Enjoy,’ the Municipal Department of Education of Armenia is pleased to present and share with the municipality’s educational community the work carried out on the English curriculum project. This project integrates the English competence standards from the first grade of primary school to the eleventh grade of secondary school, adapting them to the context of our city from a communicative perspective (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012, p.1; AT).

In the same way, some public schools in the department project a similar notion of bilingualism in their PEIs:

We can understand how national and departmental policies are committed to bilingualism as a necessary factor for development. In this way, it has been institutionally integrated as a Pilot Project that has greatly strengthened the skills of students from different social strata, especially those from strata 1 and 2, enabling them to face problematic situations in their context — from communicating with foreign visitors (tourists) to the region, to engaging in dialogue with students from other countries through the media and translating texts in English (IE Policarpa School, 2024; AT).

As mentioned above, this perspective often marginalizes indigenous and sign languages, as well as other foreign languages like French, present in the region's educational landscape since the 70s. Besides, this utilitarian perspective is closely linked to the development of tourism in Armenia and its surrounding municipalities, where, in recent years, the promotion of the Coffee Cultural Landscape as a marketable asset has been particularly emphasized. The discourses that sustain this view mainly derive from monoglossic reductionist language ideologies and ideological claims about the "universality of English" and its links to economic prosperity. As previously explained, it could be inferred in the discourse of historical and contemporary educational documents of the department of Quindío that "bilingualism", narrowly focused on Spanish English, may enhance the competitiveness of Armenia's residents in the global market and local tourism economy, but at the cost of overlooking the linguistic and cultural diversity of Quindío.

Discourses about Globalization and Economy in Official Policy Documents in Quindío

As the literature analyzing the discourses behind the NBP, the Basic Competence Standards of English, and other educational policies has already shown (Cardenas & Miranda, 2014), bilingualism is projected in Colombia as an essential requirement for insertion into the globalized world. Such a discourse has been replicated almost verbatim in most official decisions in the department, the city, and the schools. The rationale for promoting bilingualism in most official documents derives directly from the same perspective on bilingualism in the national documents, i.e., the NBP. Thus, making Quindío a pioneer in bilingualism, according to local policies such as the department's Integral Bilingualism Program, which stands for attaining levels of English based on international standards:

To achieve this, the training of teachers and students in a second language will be strengthened, aiming for a B1 level on the SABER tests⁵. Additionally, the program seeks to train licensed teachers in modern languages with a B2 proficiency level in English, preschool and primary school teachers with A1 and B1 proficiency levels in English, and to implement competitions to strengthen communicative competencies in English (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017, p. 4; AT).

A similar notion of bilingualism appears in some local schools' documents: In all professional and educational fields, languages have become an essential tool for the proper development and management of various social activities in both national and international settings. Naturally, throughout humanity around the world, the language that has been given the most importance is English. For this reason, our community cannot remain indifferent to this reality, which is becoming more evident every day, as sociocultural environments are increasingly demanding of today's communities. The Ministry of Education requires and supports institutions in their academic process of teaching English through several initiatives and incentives under the National Bilingualism Program (IE Ciudadela del Sur, 2021, p. 4; AT).

These documents do not refer to the type of bilingualism that can exist in a linguistic community or an individual who is bilingual in Spanish and an indigenous language, but rather to a bilingualism in which the binomial is completed exclusively with English, which is the language that "magically" opens the doors to success, prosperity abroad, access to technology and the possibility of access to

5 The SABER tests are national standardized exams in Colombia that assess student performance in subjects like math, reading, and science at different grade levels. They are used to measure educational quality across the country.

science. Sometimes, as has been noted in various analyses of political discourse, the term bilingualism is even mistakenly used to refer to the promotion of English monolingualism in some educational settings (Miranda & Valencia Giraldo, 2023), where students' home languages are barely used in Spanish language and Social Studies lessons. However, in some cases, even Social Sciences are taught in English (IE Ciudadela del Sur, 2009).

In Quindío and its capital city, Armenia, the commodification of bilingualism, understood as English learning, projects the same hegemonic and neoliberal tendency that authors such as De Mejía (2006), Guerrero (2008; 2010b), Miranda (2016), Miranda and Valencia (2023), and Usma (2014) have pointed out. Thus, in the documents analyzed for this article, the same metaphors that promote English as a key to the global world continue to be traced, opening doors to better employment opportunities and "facilitating communication with English-speaking communities" (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012; Gobernación del Quindío, 2017; AT).

This discourse is also reflected in regional policy documents, where additional arguments used to justify the promotion of English include the potential for international travel, particularly to English-speaking countries, as well as opportunities for pursuing studies abroad or obtaining scholarships. The above can be seen in the Integral Bilingualism Program of Quindío (2017), which states that "Proficiency in English will surely allow [students] to have access to scholarships in other countries, greater academic mobility and better job opportunities even in Colombia" (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017, p. 3; AT).

Likewise, the interdiscursive analysis of the documents reveals that English is appropriated in the documents to reinforce the commodification of language in the service of Quindío's tourism industry. The promotion of a tourism-oriented economy permeates most of the analyzed texts. This started to be highlighted in the local language policy since the 2000s, but gained more popularity after the year 2011, when UNESCO declared the territory of Quindío as part of the Coffee Cultural Landscape and Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

Quindío was recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO in 2011 as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which recognizes its cultural and landscape richness and expands its possibilities as a world-class tourist destination. However, the department must comply with quality standards that will improve customer care and service and enable a better tourism infrastructure regarding human talent (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017, p. 5; AT).

In this way, ecotourism, as the main economic activity of the department, began to be used as a leitmotif framing the necessity of English learning within the documents, and used as a key rationale for the formulation of a policy of bilingualism in the department. Thus, the insertion of labor into the department's economy is projected as one of the benefits of English-Spanish bilingualism, according to the departmental bilingualism plan, which states:

This benefit refers to the increase in the possibilities that, because of students' knowledge of English, they can more easily access the labor market, both in the department and nationally. In addition, the Development Plan "In Defense of the Common Good 2016-2019" has as a strategic priority the strengthening of tourism in the Department of Quindío, which will require a population with a high level of English proficiency. (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017; AT).

The regional panorama is no different from the national one in a trend towards the commodification of English, which continues to be hegemonically considered the key language for insertion into the global economy. This dynamic carries discursive, political, and economic

consequences, reflecting the reproduction of neoliberal narratives anchored in the constructed “need to be bilingual.” Intertextual analysis of the documents reveals a causal relationship between national educational policy and official frameworks such as the NBP, which is constantly cited in the Integral Bilingualism Plan.

These documents are cited to legitimize local interpretations of bilingualism and “the need to be bilingual”, for instance, to serve English-speaking tourists visiting the region. In addition, the NBP is specifically cited to justify the implementation of departmental bilingualism policies, which have received significant public investment. On the other hand, and no less importantly, the intertextual analysis has also revealed a causal relationship between documents that impacted educational practices. It is possible to observe in the English subject plans of some public institutions how the simulation of the tourist service is proposed as an exercise of classroom interaction in English lessons. (IE Ciudad Armenia, 2010; Enrique Olaya Herrera, 2012)

Monoglossic Ideologies within Regional Bilingual Policies and School Documents

The discourse surrounding bilingualism is influenced not only by globalization and the economy, but also by clear linguistic tendencies. One of the most common criticisms of bilingual policies in Colombia has been the privileged status of English over the other linguistic realities of Colombia (Mackenzie, 2020). For example, the role of Spanish in promoting bilingual education in a predominantly Spanish-speaking country has not been directly addressed or promoted in any official document to date (Truscott and Tejada-Sánchez, 2020), not to mention the nonexistent role of minority languages (Usma, 2015). This situation can be better understood by discussing language ideologies, or how different social actors perceive and promote language practices (Woolard, 1998). A restrictive perspective that views languages as separate codes with differing values within a hierarchy is considered a monoglossic ideology (Bettney, 2022), evident in how Colombian bilingual policies primarily focus on English learning as their main objective.

Cardona et al. (2024) argue that this oversimplification is a distinct characteristic of bilingual policies in Colombia. Deriving from Fairclough’s (2003) intratextuality and intertextuality approach to discourse analysis, the authors conclude that promoting a homogenous national curriculum around a privileged foreign language does not address the real contexts of most public schools. This is evident when a similar discourse is present in national and regional documents.

For instance, the NBP states that its main objective is “having competent citizens to communicate in English, with internationally comparable standards, that insert the country in the processes of universal communication, in the global economy and cultural openness” (MEN, 2006, p. 12; AT). The interchangeability of bilingualism for learning English as a foreign language has been present ever since the first official document supporting bilingual policies in Colombia was issued. It can be similarly traced in many of the local documents that regulate decisions in schools and classrooms. In this way, the PAMI document states: “Being bilingual is essential in a globalized world. Using a second language means being able to communicate better, to open borders, to understand other contexts, to appropriate knowledge and to make it circulate” (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012; AT). By the same token, the Integral Bilingualism Plan of the department claims: “for the department of Quindío, it is essential to design and implement strategies that allow, as proposed by the National English program, 2015-2025, to raise the communicative competence in English of students and teachers in all official

educational institutions” (Gobernación del Quindío, 2017; AT).

The previous quotes are part of the official rationale for bilingual policies for the city and the department. The direct relation between these documents and the official position towards bilingualism as a synonym of English learning is evident, as it is also clear how a national perspective in an official document trickles down to a regional level and, subsequently, to more local contexts, directly influencing decision-making in schools and classrooms. A similar wording and intention are purported in the general objectives regarding bilingualism on the PEIs of the different schools analyzed, for instance:

It is a necessity to continue with the Pilot Project in Bilingualism and to end it on a high note with the implementation of the Bilingual Academic vocational track which allows students and the Educational Community the possibility of accrediting their competencies in the English language through the measurement of the level of performance shown in an international evaluation (IE Policarpa Salavarrieta, 2016; AT).

“For all of the above reasons, it is important to implement an institutional educational project, which aims at state policies but simultaneously strengthens and potentiates the students’ communicative skills in foreign languages” (IE CASD, 2016; AT).

“Given that the spaces for interaction with the foreign language are limited only to English classes, it is necessary to create a bilingual environment inside and outside the classroom where students must express themselves in a foreign language” (IE Santa Maria Goretti, 2021; AT)

The acknowledgment of English as the main focus of any bilingual school program has existed since the beginning of official bilingual policies (De Mejía, 2011) and continues to be present, possibly because it is a practical way to solve a complex problem. According to Kahneman (2012, 2011), this is a typical cognitive process when dealing with multifaceted issues. The author suggests that when people are faced with a difficult question, they tend to instinctively answer a different, easier question related to the original one. This process is known as substitution bias, and in this context, it can clarify why discussions about bilingualism are frequently mixed with discussions about English learning. However, this substitution results in a restrictive or monoglossic approach to languages that can hinder a richer educational experience.

The monoglossic tendencies in official school documents directly relate to the restrictive perspective on bilingualism in national policies. This intertextuality is manifest and can be understood as the way schools and teachers attempt to answer the issues that national policies arise. In every document, English is the main objective of bilingualism policies, and its importance is consistently highlighted as an economic asset that favors students. Another evident similarity and intertextual link is the absence of a discussion about the role of Spanish and other languages in developing bilingual education.

According to Spiro and Crisfield (2018), a monoglossic perspective of languages in bilingual education can mean that at the school level, programs are proposed to decrease the interference of the “mother tongue” so that each language has a separate existence that cannot and should not account for the other. A monoglossic perspective implies a disavowing of linguistic variety and translanguaging (García, 2009) and a kind of dissection of the target foreign language. Substituting bilingualism for English learning as a quantifiable goal can also explain how English learning is separated into skills to be promoted in isolation. As a result, some schools have decided to separate English teaching from skills taught by different teachers. (IE Rafel Uribe Uribe, 2023)

It can be argued that there is a direct relationship between the monoglossic perspective and the commodification of English. It not only implies substituting a complex problem for a more achievable and quantifiable goal, but it also implies a prevalence of traditional beliefs about language learning. Traditional beliefs around education are manifest in discourse and decision-making: “Teachers and other stakeholders are left struggling with their own tacit beliefs that have evolved and resemble practices that look like their own experience as students rather than an informed decision based on the theory” (Berger, 2012, p. 57). It is tradition rather than reflection that ultimately influences policies and practices in schools, a tradition that resists change, 20 years after implementing the first bilingual national policy. The overemphasis of English as the only goal in practice when talking about bilingualism is a distinct characteristic of Quindío and Armenia, which implies an apparent influence from the shortcomings of official discourses in the first bilingual policies.

Another way of making sense of the monoglossic tradition within bilingual policies is to consider background incentives, as Sowell (2000) proposes: “Policies are often discussed in terms of the goals they proclaim rather than the incentives they create” (p. 469). In this light, the commodification of English is a straightforward incentive for several profit organizations that have been influential in developing national and regional policies. Cardona-Escobar et al. (2024) argue that the role of Public-private partnerships (PPPs) is also a significant influence on the regional decisions around bilingual policies: “The cost that public educational institutions pay usually comes in the form of the loss of autonomy for those public institutions and the strengthening of accountability pressures exercised on them” (Cardona et al., 2024, p. 2).

The lucrative incentives created by the national policies are part and parcel of PPPs (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016) and must be considered when analyzing the impact and local decisions inside public institutions. Private institutions and other organizations in the region, such as *Colombo Americano*, *Empresarios por la Educación*, and the British Council, undeniably influence the decision-making process. For instance, these three private organizations were the main sponsors of two national bilingualism congresses, both held in Armenia, Quindío, in 2009 and 2011. This has paved the way for such institutions to become “authorities in the matter”, materializing in professional training programs for teachers and students, participation in the department board of bilingualism, and other related events. For instance, in the last report from Armenia’s Board of Education regarding bilingual education in the city, partnerships with these institutions are described as “technical assistance,” which is emphasized as a crucial aspect of bilingual development from 2014 to 2019 (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2019).

The Current State of Bilingualism Discourses in the Region

In the present government national administration (2022-2026), characterized by introducing ‘change’ at all levels of social, economic, cultural, and political life, a different type of discourse is perceived not only in recent documents issued by the Ministry of Education (MEN) but also at the local level; such is the case of *Estrategia de Acompañamiento Pedagógico Territorio SCHOLA 2024-2027* (Pedagogical Guidance Territory SCHOLA 2024-2027) (SEM, 2024), a document published this year by the local Board of Education in Armenia. Following directives by MEN, the SEM presented the document as a ‘strategy’: the re-signification of school space-time.

The national government, in line with the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* (National Development Plan) (2022-2026), and Law 2294 (2023), stipulated what could be understood as a reconsideration

of the education system and a re-signification of the school day towards school time, entitled “resignification of school time towards comprehensive development and the protection of life and education paths” (AT); in other words, problematizing existing traditional concepts of education, and extending learning opportunities through a more diverse educational offer, so that schools may cater to regional characteristics. This should then enable an understanding of the territory of education beyond the school borders. As the document highlights, the SEM will play a protagonist role in guiding, constructing, or updating the pedagogical strategy of schools so that they may respond to the specific needs in each territory. That is, each society needs to recognize the place in which the formative process takes place, so that a particular city may become an education system. The pedagogical guidance strategy includes ‘badges’-or labels- on different topics, among them a new PEI 2024-2027. Other labels, for instance, refer to education, including multilingualism and social and environmental issues, a more inclusive discourse compared to other policies and school documents, like the ones mentioned above.

Multilingualism

In the case of multilingualism, the SCHOLA document of the SEM (2024) takes distance from bilingualism, understood as bilingualism in English and Spanish, referring to that concept so common in previous official policy documents. The section on multilingualism starts by referring to the pioneering role of the department of Quindío in the teaching of foreign languages, a fact that is especially highlighted in most official documents in the SEM, citing as evidence of this the curricular construction by teachers in Armenia, around the Curricular Project Humanities- English which produced the PAMI (Alcaldía de Armenia, 2012), as noted previously, a guide for teachers, published in 2012. However, as stated in the document, “the city aims at acknowledging the linguistic diversity of the territory, recognizing the importance of all ethnic languages, sign languages, and foreign languages, through education for multilingualism” (AT), calling attention towards diversity and inclusion of all languages in the ‘territory’, without a direct mention of English.

Additionally, the ‘label’ of multilingualism reinforces the concept of proficiency *-competencia-*, a commonly used term in most school documents in Quindío, not mentioning other more recent approaches to the teaching and learning of a foreign language. As the SCHOLA document adds, the contribution of schools is fundamental in strengthening the skills and communicative and cultural proficiency that students must achieve in an articulate and coherent way with the process of teaching and learning of languages, according to their sociocultural and sociolinguistic needs. A positive aspect of the discourse here is the attention students receive in this process, one that is more connected with the students’ lives.

A significant turn in the discourse around bilingualism in SCHOLA is notable, in this case, changing from the previous rhetoric around the hegemony of English language teaching to recognizing the existence of other languages in the territory and the students’ realities. This opens the possibility of a more inclusive panorama in education in Armenia, and Quindío, acknowledging the region’s existing linguistic and cultural diversity. This new trend in official policy is also perceived in the school’s PEIs, as some institutions have recently updated their discourse to include other languages, Spanish, French, and sign language, as it has been highlighted in the analysis of the data selected for the discourse analysis in this article.

The multilingual perspective is starting to be part of the discourse around bilingualism in the latest versions of documents of some schools in the region. The term and its implications are explicitly

referenced, as is the recognition of Spanish as a central part of bilingual education: “It is crucial to highlight the importance of students’ first language in learning a second language. The knowledge gained from their first language can be a foundation for acquiring the second language” (IE CASD, 2016; AT).

Despite these new narratives, changes in the discourse of policy implementation in the schools, militate against a significantly rooted ideology of bilingualism among teachers, in this case, ‘English only’ in the everyday pedagogical practices in the majority of institutions, where teachers insist on the presence of one foreign language, English, in their classes, practically ignoring any possibility of translanguaging into Spanish; even if in their practices, they resort to Spanish very frequently. This seems to be a valid option for students and for teachers in their everyday practices, as previously shown in the data analysis; nevertheless, despite the strategies proposed by SCHOLA, tensions will continue to be present in schools in Quindío.

As for the near future, as stated in SCHOLA, the SEM intends to sort out difficulties, working closely with the schools, considering what the schools have been doing so far, guiding them, and working on what they have constructed already. According to a recent interview with the document’s author (Velez, 2024), the strategies proposed are designed for a medium term, about four years, showing respect for what the schools have done so far regarding multilingualism and its important role. The author also insists on the work one of the schools (Normal Superior del Quindío) has done over the last six years, trying to build their multilingual proposal in English, French, and Sign Language, besides teaching Math in English. This school has started this process with lower grades and plans to integrate grade 11 into the scheme. Their goal is to reach the B1 level in the CEFR. One of the issues public schools faces is the shortage of teachers of English in primary school, as in the case of Normal Nacional school, with teachers teaching all subjects, including English. To meet their needs, they have reached agreements with local private and public universities in Armenia, so that teachers who need more preparation in ELT may teach English. As the author of SCHOLA admits, there has been a lack of articulation of the SEM with the schools, and resources are limited.

As shown here so far, even though the discourse of bilingualism now reflects a more inclusive tone, and new spaces are created for Spanish and other languages such as French and Sign Language, there is a persistent attitude towards English and its instrumentalization, as evidenced in the majority of the documents analyzed here, as tourism, and the need to learn English is considered a must for the future of Education in the region. As the author of SCHOLA mentioned, it is necessary to adopt a more ‘aggressive’ strategy in future investment in tourism in the SED, in articulation with the schools and the strategies to innovate in education, especially in multilingualism.

Conclusions

The analysis of the various documents indicates a clear tendency in the discourse around bilingualism at the local level that directly relates to the national discourse that has not evolved officially since the implementation of the NBP in Colombia. In the light of CDA (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2005; Wodak, 2014), the analysis of this tendency can be better understood. Such a framework points to an intertextual connection that has persisted for at least twenty years in the national and local policies.

From a diachronic perspective, the analysis of the documents reveals a common pattern, that is, the pervasive predisposition to promoting English learning as the core of most bilingual policies. This intention manifests in policies regulating and promoting bilingual education, such as the draft law

of bilingualism in the department, a curriculum proposal for public schools in Armenia (PAMI), and most of the PEIs and school curricula analyzed in the sample. The findings suggest that this pattern is related to commodifying English as a valuable skill in terms of economic opportunities in a framework of globalization, leading to a conflation of bilingualism with English learning.

Another way to understand this reductive view of bilingualism is the process of simplification proposed by Kahneman (2011,2012). Based on the author's notion, the complexity of bilingualism incentivizes the use of an easier, quantifiable proxy, English learning, which becomes a more precise objective to regulate in any policy and curriculum proposal than addressing bilingualism with all its implications. Consequently, the influence of private-public partnerships (PPPs) is another characteristic of regional bilingual policies. As Cardona et al. (2024) have pointed out, allocating budget and decision-making power to institutions that design materials, workshops, and mentorships is a direct consequence of the commodification of English.

In the same way, there are many traces of a monoglossic perspective of languages (Spiro & Crisfield, 2018) in the rationale of the local policies analyzed. The absence of an explicit mention of the role of Spanish and other local languages in the learning and teaching of English and other foreign languages presupposes an independence of languages, each as a separate body of knowledge and skills to be learned in isolation. It also implies a particular hierarchy of languages where English and the Anglo-Saxon cultural expressions carry a reputation over the local linguistic realities.

Despite all the propensities for the stagnation of bilingual discourse, there has been a small but significant change in some local policies in schools and education agencies. Specifically, the proposal of SCHOLA (2024) by the SEM in Armenia and the development of some curricular decisions in a couple of schools in the region open the possibility of multilingualism as an alternative perspective to profit from the ecology of languages and cultures in the local context. This becomes a significant starting point to address the complexities of language learning and its implications for cultural enrichment.

The conclusions of the analysis presented so far have become more relevant for discussing bilingual education and multilingual perspectives, especially now that a void is evident in the development of official national policies. Schools, universities, and other public institutions should aim to endorse their own contextualized analysis to promote bottom-up policies that make more sense to the needs and expectations of each regional context.

Statement of originality

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

Conflicts of interest

We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

Authors Contributions

Jefersson Arias-Alzate: Conceptualization, data curation, investigation, project administration, validation, writing original draft.

Jorge Mario Perdomo-Santacruz: Software, formal analysis, investigation, visualization, Writing original draft, resources.

Silvia Valencia-Giraldo: Methodology, Writing, review and editing, investigation, supervision, writing original draft.

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Exploring Critical Perspectives in English Teaching and Learning at a Colombian University

Exploración de Perspectivas Críticas en la Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en una Universidad Colombiana

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Abstract

A critical perspectives approach to teaching and learning English as a foreign language is a relatively recent practice in Colombia. Even though reports explain how this approach is enacted in the curriculum, few studies have been conducted on how teacher educators and pre-service teachers deal with its implementation in their everyday practices. Hence, a descriptive qualitative study was conducted at a public university to delve into the perceptions of teacher educators and pre-service teachers regarding this approach and their challenges. The participants were nine teacher educators and thirty-one pre-service teachers teaching and learning English following a curriculum based on critical perspectives. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and a survey. The thematic analysis of the data yielded results that suggest a nuanced perception of participants, especially the pre-service teachers, and highlight the challenges that both groups of participants undertake when teaching and learning English through critical perspectives. These findings suggest an important issue in the EFL field, which is the need for going beyond language as a system when teaching and learning it, while ensuring in-service teachers' professional development and an adequate balance between linguistic aspects of the language and the promotion of critical awareness.

Keywords: critical perspectives, curriculum, EFL, ELT, teacher education

Resumen

La inclusión de las perspectivas críticas en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera es una práctica relativamente reciente en Colombia, y aunque existen reportes que explican cómo se implementa este enfoque en el plan de estudios, se han realizado pocos estudios sobre cómo los profesores formadores y en formación perciben su implementación. En consecuencia, se realizó un estudio cualitativo descriptivo en una universidad pública para profundizar en las percepciones de profesores formadores y en formación y en los desafíos que este enfoque conlleva. Los participantes fueron nueve profesores formadores y treinta y un profesores en formación que enseñaban y aprendían inglés siguiendo un plan de estudios basado en perspectivas críticas. Los datos se recolectaron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas, análisis de documentos y un cuestionario. El análisis temático de los datos arrojó resultados que sugieren una percepción matizada de los participantes, especialmente los docentes en formación, y que destacan los desafíos que ambos grupos de participantes enfrentan al enseñar y aprender inglés a través de pedagogías críticas. Estos hallazgos sugieren una cuestión muy importante en el área de inglés como lengua extranjera, la cual es la necesidad de ir más allá de la lengua como un sistema, mientras se asegura el desarrollo profesional de los docentes que integran estas perspectivas y un equilibrio adecuado entre los aspectos lingüísticos y la promoción de una conciencia crítica.

Palabras claves: perspectivas críticas, currículo, inglés como lengua extranjera.

Résumé

L'intégration des perspectives critiques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère est une pratique relativement récente en Colombie, et bien qu'il existe des rapports qui expliquent comment cette approche est mise en œuvre dans le programme d'études, peu d'études ont été menées sur la façon dont les enseignants formateurs et en formation perçoivent sa mise en œuvre. En conséquence, une étude qualitative descriptive a été menée dans une université publique afin d'approfondir les perceptions des enseignants formateurs et en formation et les défis que cette approche comporte. Les participants étaient neuf enseignants formateurs et trente et un enseignant en formation qui enseignaient et apprenaient l'anglais en suivant un programme d'études basé sur des perspectives critiques. Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'entretiens semi-structurés, d'une analyse de documents et d'un questionnaire. L'analyse thématique des données a révélé des résultats qui suggèrent une perception nuancée des participants, en particulier des enseignants en formation, et qui mettent en évidence les défis auxquels les deux groupes de participants sont confrontés lorsqu'ils enseignent et apprennent l'anglais à travers des pédagogies critiques. Ces résultats soulèvent une question très importante dans le domaine de l'anglais langue étrangère, à savoir la nécessité d'aller au-delà de la langue en tant que système, tout en assurant le développement professionnel des enseignants qui intègrent ces perspectives et un équilibre approprié entre les aspects linguistiques et la promotion d'une conscience critique.

Mots clés: perspectives critiques, curriculum, anglais comme langue étrangère.

Resumo

A inclusão das perspectivas críticas no ensino é aprendizagem do inglês como língua estrangeira é uma prática relativamente recente na Colômbia, e bem que existem reportes que explicam como se implementa a abordagem no plano de estudos, foram realizados poucos estudos sobre como os professores formadores e em formação percebemos sua implementação. Como consequência, foi realizado um estudo qualitativo descritivo numa universidade pública para aprofundar nas percepções de professores formadores e na formação e nos desafios que essa abordagem implica. Os participantes foram nove professores formadores e trinta e um professores em formação que ensinavam e aprendiam o inglês conforme um plano de estudos baseado nas perspectivas críticas. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, análise de documentos e um questionário. A análise temática dos dados apresentou resultados que sugerem uma percepção matizada dos participantes, especialmente os professores em formação e que ressaltam os desafios que os dois grupos de participantes lidam com o momento de ensinar e aprender o inglês por meio de pedagogias críticas. Essas constatações sugerem uma pergunta muito importante na área do inglês como língua estrangeira, que é a necessidade de ir mais além da língua como um sistema, enquanto é garantido o desenvolvimento profissional dos professores que fazem parte dessas perspectivas e um equilíbrio adequado entre os aspectos linguísticos e a promoção duma consciência crítica.

Palavras chave: Perspectivas críticas, currículo, inglês como língua estrangeira

Introduction

According to Carr and Thésée (2020), “[...] Education seems to function, at the same time, as an incontrovertible lever and brake toward and against the social transformations required to make society more just, engaged, inclusive and ‘democratic’[...]” (p. 68). Thus, they cite Morin (1999) and Petrella (2000) to reflect on the kind of education that is needed to achieve this purpose.

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), all sorts of approaches to teaching and learning, based on socioeconomic and historical contexts, have emerged, with a tendency to teach the foreign language not only for communicative purposes, but also in a way that reinforces its status as a dominant language over the others spoken in the region (García, 2019). In the global South, recent language teaching praxis and research have focused attention on critical perspectives (CP), responding to a shift in paradigm and pursuing a more inclusive and contextualized approach to teaching.

Consequently, foreign language education programs that have identified this need seek to educate teachers who have language knowledge and who respond to the daily challenges of a society permeated by power structures based on colonialism, inequality, and gender issues, among others. The program in which this study was conducted understands CP as an umbrella term for different approaches, such as critical pedagogies and critical discourse analysis, that share three main endeavors: establishing connections between the classroom and society at large; transformative education; and self-reflection (Escuela de Idiomas, 2022, our translation). As Echeverri-Sucerquia (2020) points out, critical pedagogies situated in a Latin-American context emphasize the political dimension of education, thereby inviting future generations of teachers to position themselves within this framework of political action.

A central issue that our paper addresses is that little is known about how teacher educators and pre-service teachers face this challenge. This is the case of a foreign language teacher education program at Universidad de Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia, whose curricular renewal is based on critical perspectives. Accordingly, a case study was conducted to gain a holistic understanding of the participants’ perceptions of the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language through critical perspectives in this setting. Thus, to delve into this issue, in this paper, we address the question: how do teacher educators and pre-service teachers from a bachelor’s degree in foreign language education perceive the English teaching and learning process based on critical perspectives?

Theoretical Background

Critical Perspectives and Foreign Language Teaching

Banegas and Villacañas de Castro (2016) state that criticality has been present in various aspects of the teaching-learning process. On the one hand, it can be seen in the intentions to develop critical thinking in students, meaning “being able to identify assumptions and evaluate evidence and issues logically” (p. 1). On the other hand, Freire, cited by Rahimi and Sajed (2014), claims that this understanding is not enough since empowering communities to bring about social transformation towards a more equitable society is necessary. It is this understanding of critical, according to Banegas and Villacañas de Castro (2016), that has allowed the improvement of the teaching and learning process, since it has enabled teachers and students to reflect on the power relations implicit in linguistic and

educational policies and to implement teaching methods oriented to the needs of students.

However, Nieto (2009) expresses that the way knowledge has been imparted has remained as the transmission of a unique way of seeing reality. It has been presented as fixed, static, and isolated, and the historical problems that humanity has experienced have been omitted and censored. Therefore, the role of critical perspectives is the recognition of the multiple ways of approaching a problem, so that students understand its complexity, and take a participatory stance as social agents, who are transformers of their reality. Accordingly, language is both a structural and functional dimension, socially implicated as discourse and, consequently, involved in the construction of individuals and the change of social structures (Crookes, 2012). Within this change of structures, Echeverri-Sucerquia (2020) argues that CP can contribute to “create a different history for ourselves and the future generations without forgetting what we have been through” (p. 26).

Critical Perspectives and Foreign Language Learning

To approach foreign language learning within the framework of CP, understanding the concept of language is important since this comprehension impacts the teaching and learning process, from curriculum design to teaching practice itself (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Reagan & Osborn, 2020). For instance, Kumaravadivelu (2006) proposes three ways of understanding language: the first one views it as a system, as the assembly of linguistic elements, phonemes, words, and phrases that converge in the production of texts presented either orally or in writing. The second way intends to go beyond language as a system: it views it as a discourse, that is, the use of language in a social context. Finally, transcending the systemic and discursive notion of language, it is understood as a set of social and cultural experiences, which are determined by power relations in which certain social groups rule over others. This is why, according to Kumaravadivelu (2006), teaching and learning a language becomes an opportunity for both teachers and students to build a “critical consciousness” (p. 69), making these power relations visible through critical discourse analysis.

Moreover, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) understand language as a social practice, where “knowing a language, therefore, means more than knowing a linguistic system or communicating information, it means engaging in social practices using that system in order to participate in social life” (p. 14). In this sense, Darvin and Norton (2015) add that understanding language as a social practice that constructs and is constructed also implies understanding that behind a student there is a social subject with a constantly changing identity.

Teacher’s Role, Student’s Role, and Critical Perspectives

Critical perspectives are reflected in curricula that aim at discussing issues of multilingualism, interculturalism, identities, gender, and race, among others (Norton & Toohey, 2004, as cited in Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016). Likewise, as stated by Crookes (2012), the elements of the curriculum must be related to the lives of students and the problematic situations in which social transformation can take place. This is why this author emphasizes that language teaching through these perspectives does not have an implicit fixed method. In this sense, Kumaravadivelu (2006) demystifies the idea of method in foreign language teaching and teacher education to describe the role of the teacher and that of the student, within the framework of critical perspectives and the conception of language as a structural, functional, and ideological dimension. In this context, the teacher will guide the students to discover the way in which they learn and thus take ownership and control of their own process by

allowing themselves to establish learning objectives and strategies. Additionally, the teacher should promote independent study, while encouraging the development of their students' skills, competencies, and level of awareness of themselves, of their environment, and their constantly changing identity in terms of their community and that of the target language.

Furthermore, Reagan and Osborn (2020) explain that a teacher is a subject who makes decisions in the classroom based on reflection of their own practice, by thinking about “what takes place, what choices there are [...] in a critical and analytical way” (p. 22). As Reagan and Osborn (2020) conclude, this process must consider not only the learning of grammatical structures and the accumulation of terms in another language, but also the fact that the learner is in constant reconstruction, supporting Gardner's conclusion (1985), according to which the learner is forming an identity in the language being learned.

Research Design

We employed a descriptive qualitative approach to delve into the nuances of the participants' experiences, gain insights, and better understand their perceptions. As Merriam (1998) points out, “a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (p. 19). The case on which we focused, the perceptions of the academic community teaching and learning English as a foreign language through a critical perspectives approach, was significant in shedding light on how each part of the academic community faces this endeavor.

Context

We conducted this research at Universidad de Antioquia, a public university located in the northwestern part of Colombia. It took place in a bachelor's program in foreign language education. The disciplinary component of this program is composed of three language acquisition cycles:

The basic cycle, which takes place in the first three semesters; the intermediate cycle in the fourth and fifth semesters; and finally, the advanced cycle between the sixth and eighth semesters. Semesters 9 and 10 are not part of these language acquisition cycles as they are dedicated to research work and teaching practices. (Escuela de Idiomas, 2022, our translation, p. 82).

We invited pre-service teachers from the first to eighth semesters and teacher educators who had taught these courses as well. We aimed at including participants across different proficiency levels, age groups, and socio-cultural contexts. We obtained informed consent from participants, guaranteed confidentiality, and followed ethical guidelines throughout the study (Vicerrectoría de Investigación, Comisión Institucional de Ética, & Comité Central de Ética en la Investigación, n.d.)

Data Collection Methods

According to Creswell (2003), case studies require data collection to be systematic and from multiple sources. Our approach allowed us to collect rich and comprehensive data through the sources described below.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Glesne (2006) argues that interviews allow learning about “opinions, perceptions, and attitudes towards some topic” (p. 80). Thus, this method for data collection is frequently used in qualitative research because it enhances the comprehension of the phenomena studied. We conducted one-on-one interviews with the nine teacher educators who participated in the study. These interviews were guided by open-ended questions, allowing participants to express their thoughts freely. We were interested in topics such as their lesson planning and teaching strategies based on a critical perspectives approach.

Document Analysis

To triangulate the data, we examined the *Proyecto Educativo del Programa* (Educational Project of Program, EPP), which is the document that establishes the policies and principles of the bachelor’s program; and the syllabi for each course, as provided by the administration of the bachelor’s program.

Survey

Thirty-one pre-service teachers completed the survey that was sent to all those who were enrolled in the English courses when this study took place. Its purpose was to explore participants’ views on the courses they followed, and on the teaching and learning process.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of qualitative data, Bryman (2012) and Creswell (2012) recognize two strategies: deductive and inductive. We followed a thematic approach with inductive and deductive coding. We analyzed the syllabi, collected the answers to the survey, and transcribed the interview recordings. We coded the data line by line, identifying recurring themes related to the participants’ perceptions. Then, we grouped codes into broader categories, exploring connections between themes. We compared data across participants, paying attention to discrepancies and similarities between their perspectives. This iterative process allowed us to refine themes and identify patterns. Also, we regularly cross-checked our interpretations to minimize bias and ensure consistency.

Results and Discussion

This study showed important results for the setting in which it took place, and for the academic community interested in the process of implementation of a critical perspectives approach to teaching and learning English at the undergraduate level. We present the results in two main axes: those related to teacher educators and those related to pre-service teachers. Then, we propose a dialogue between these findings and the documents that we analyzed, which leads to the main conclusions of the study. Since data were collected in Spanish, we translated all the citations included below from participants, to whom were assigned pseudonyms to ensure ethical considerations.

Teacher Educators

The group of teacher educators who participated in this study has been educated at Universidad de Antioquia, either at the undergraduate level, postgraduate level, or both. Most of them graduated from the Master’s in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning offered by this university, specifically the Critical Perspectives on Language and Culture Research line, which “focuses on the study of teaching and learning practices in language education and culture from both critical and socio-cultural perspectives. [...] Special attention is paid to social, cultural, ideological, and political factors that shape language education in the Colombian context.” (Escuela de Idiomas, n.d., para. 4). We counted on at least one professor who had

taught every English course offered in this bachelor's program. The analysis of the data collected from the teacher educators produced two main categories: methodology and their perceptions about the program.

Methodology

In critical perspectives, the role of the educator is to promote the use of the foreign language not only as a means of communication, but also to problematize society and the power relations embedded in it (Luke & Woods, 2009). This section describes the principles and beliefs of the teacher educators who participated in the study, their understanding of language, and the teaching strategies they use to enact the syllabi. These aspects contribute to an informed understanding of teacher educators' perceptions, as they are the primary agents who bring the curriculum to life.

Principles. The main principles that the participants reported in the interviews conducted in this study were commitment, social awareness, respect, and empathy (Bella, Earl, Ferrara, and Filomena, interview, question 2). The participants acknowledged that these principles were also present in the philosophy of the undergraduate program and the syllabi of the courses that they taught. This shows their knowledge of the syllabi under their responsibility as well as their alignment with the *Proyecto Educativo del Programa* (EPP). Remi, for instance, reported that “diversity will always be a tool, an enriching element, and that alone is a huge change [in this program] (interview, question 2). This comment is coherent with the cultural dimension of the holistic education that the School of Languages aims at promoting when it declares its commitment to an education that fosters openness to different ways of seeing the world to contribute to democratic, inclusive, and respectful interactions (Escuela de Idiomas, 2006). It is noteworthy that these principles are also noticeable in Freire's pedagogy of freedom (2000), when he defines the importance of opposing discrimination in any way it can present itself.

Language. The way the teacher educators who participated in the study understand language reflects the principles that frame their teaching practices. Not only that, but also their understanding of language is coherent with a critical perspectives approach to language teaching, in which language is perceived as holistically built in the interaction with the context in which communication and meaning negotiation takes place (Escuela de Idiomas, 2022). Thus it makes sense that the most frequently used words to describe their view of language are linked to ideas such as reflection, construction of identity, communication, and evolution (Bella, Earl, Ferrara, and Filomena, interview, question 3).

For instance, Ferrara explains that languages are “tools that allow me to get closer to other cultures, to another knowledge, to have the privilege of reading in other languages” (interview, question 3). While Bella, defines language as “something alive and that is built through one's experiences rather than through grammar” (interview, question 3). This concept is aligned with the way the bachelor's program defines language, since it is recognized as a socially situated practice, thus a dynamic one (Shohamy, 2007).

Teaching Strategies. The most frequent strategies mentioned by our participants are multimodality, inclusion of new material, problematization, and analysis. These strategies show commitment to a critical perspectives approach to teaching foreign languages since they aim to make language learning relevant to everyday situations. They promote problem-solving, question societal norms and beliefs, encourage the exploration of new solutions, and foster openness to diverse

viewpoints (Escuela de Idiomas, 2022). All of these are promoted by the policies followed by the bachelor's program and, as such, suggested in the syllabi. However, some educators mentioned that they learned through trial and error and were also inspired by the feedback received from the students, either verbally or non-verbally.

Ferrara, for example, stated that the first time she taught the first semester of the program, she noticed how her students reacted to the documents that she proposed, and the impact these had on their understanding of language and of their role as future teachers, and how this affected her choice of materials. In the interview, she said the following: "I want to teach English to pre-service teachers with different purposes. Hence, I brought different types of texts that allowed me to problematize each unit of the course" (Question 4). This citation shows the need for teacher educators to innovate in the implementation of the syllabi, which is a challenge with which they have dealt since the beginning of the implementation of the curricular renewal of this bachelor's program, as will be shown in the section focused on challenges.

Perceptions about the Bachelor's Program

This section of the results presents how the teacher educators evaluated the English component and the program itself. Despite the challenges, all of them made a positive assessment. Earl, for instance, who has taught the English grammar course, acknowledges the following: "To me, the main changes relate to the critical reading profile [of the course]. Reading from different perspectives and generating more participation from the students. It's moved from a vertical view of grammar; the exercises are different" (interview, question 8).

In addition, they highlight the curriculum's flexibility, the philosophy that fuels the program, and allows students to explore various facets of the teaching identity while going beyond mere linguistic rules. Nonetheless, the teacher educators who participated in the study also criticized the program. First, they consider that the proposal for some courses is ambitious for the time at which it is intended to be implemented. Filomena summarizes this by stating that despite her 10-year long career teaching English, she felt overwhelmed the first time she taught a beginner course in this bachelor's program because she felt it had too many elements to consider (interview, question 9), second they mentioned lack of clarity in the definition of language in the official documents, such as, EPP, and that more emphasis should be placed on discursive structures. The latest may appear since a frequent concern among the pre-service teachers is the feeling that the process of learning French at the bachelor's program starts from the most basic, which they do not consider happens in English.

Although quite challenging, the teacher educators that we interviewed value the inclusion of critical perspectives, as they believe that these allow students to unleash their potential, go beyond the linguistic mechanism, deconstruct prejudices, learn in a contextualized way, and develop their autonomy as language learners and their civic awareness. For instance, Filomena, on the one hand, recognizes that critical approaches are important, even though she admits that she prioritizes the linguistic component of the courses that she has taught. Ferrara, on the other hand, reported that she managed to promote critical reflections without overlooking the linguistic aspect of the teaching and learning process. However, she needed to make some changes because she noticed she was focusing her attention on the students who were not true beginners in the first-semester course she taught, and disregarding the ones who were true beginners.

Challenges and Suggestions

Although the group of teacher educators highlights the impact that the education provided to students can have on the community at large, they consider it necessary to start working from the grassroots, in the practicum. As they state, this might allow the institutions that host the students to become imbued with the curricular proposal and facilitate the integration between the University and the community. Ferrara illustrates this by explaining how her role as a practicum advisor in the curricular proposal that preceded the current one allowed her to analyze how a critical approach to teaching was materialized by pre-service teachers.

Another challenge that the participants report is the need to establish clear communication of the curricular proposal with the pre-service teachers, since these tend to voice their concerns about their learning of the systemic characteristics of language; therefore, more dialogue is needed to close this gap. This idea may be linked to the fact that some teacher educators report a low interest in critical perspectives among their students and what their inclusion in courses implies, that is, the deconstruction of the idea of language as a fixed mechanism.

Consequently, the suggestions that the teacher educators make to the program aim to encourage students to understand language from an organic and a social perspective. This suggestion also applies to the teacher educators currently teaching in this bachelor's program, since it is crucial for them to know the curricular proposal and the principles that guide it. Therefore, a recommendation from the participants of this study is that future candidates to teach in the bachelor's program be selected based on their knowledge of critical perspectives, and that, if possible, professional development on this approach be offered, and specific materials be shared so that the program's proposal can successfully be implemented in this institution. This is something that any institution that includes critical perspectives in its curriculum should consider.

Pre-service Teachers

Thirty-one students from the first to eighth semesters participated in this study. This section summarizes the findings related to their perceptions about the English learning and teaching process through a critical approach.

Perceptions of Teaching and Learning from Pre-service Teachers

In this section of the results, we present the way pre-service teachers have perceived the teaching of English in their undergraduate program. We identified two trends within their responses to the survey: one is aligned with their own conception and construction of their teacher identity, and the other explicitly states their experience learning English as a foreign language in the curricular proposal of this program.

In the pre-service teachers' perception of English instruction, it is discernible that their pedagogical and didactic conceptions are centered on student identity, contextual factors, and the imparting of linguistic and cultural aspects. However, it is noticeable that the answers to most of the questions from the survey showed changes in the discourse when the concept of *critical perspective* or *critical consciousness* is explicit. This trend may make evident the influence that the critical perspectives in this context of pre-service teacher education have had on their own views of the world and language education; nevertheless, the data suggested a gap in the understanding of language as an ideology, as the EPP proposes. The table below illustrates the transition of responses to different questions in the survey.

Table 1 <i>Perception towards the Learning and Teaching of English</i>		
Participant	Questions and Answers	
	Question 1. From your perception and construction of your teaching identity, how should a language be taught?	Question 4. What do you consider to be the role of critical reflection in foreign language learning?
Gabriela	In my opinion, this process should be carried out considering each student's prior knowledge, particular interests, and the connection of the proposed topics with the current social context.	[...] I believe that being reflective allows us to use our knowledge not only in the classroom, but also in political and social scenarios in a highly globalized world where we tend to see the status of certain languages, cultures, and ways of thinking, over others; where it is necessary to use languages as a means of dissemination and expression of criticism of the system of which we are part.
Javier	I believe that to teach a language, several very important aspects must be considered. The first aspect is the student's objective, which is connected to their context, [...] The second aspect has to do with the linguistic aspect, [...] and the third aspect, to call it in some way, I would say, is the relevance of learning that language for society, which includes the critical aspects that in my opinion should be present in every educational act.	The role that critical reflection plays in this field is especially important because learning a foreign language has many political and economic interests behind it, and people must be very aware of the implications of this and the interests to which it responds.
Raúl	Mainly with a very holistic approach with different levels of flexibility according to the different stages of language learning and recognizing specific contexts. Likewise, teaching as an accompanying guide and not as a "guardian of knowledge".	What the program has allowed me to see is to think of language as a possibility to interact among different cultures, to recognize the different dynamics between each of them but also similarities, instead of a barrier between different niches of social interaction that will lead me to a purely individual development of knowledge. In the same sense, language serves as an excuse for the construction of community.

Note. The table shows the results of the survey applied to the pre-service teachers about their perception towards the learning and teaching of English. Own creation.

In this regard, teaching is influenced by the concept of language conceived within the EPP. From the perspective of the surveyed pre-service teachers, there is evidence of a concept of language that transcends mere communication, by considering culture, social dynamics, as well as differences and similarities. Language is perceived as a tool for community-building and addressing social issues. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the preceding category, they acknowledged that this is the program's concept of language, not necessarily the one they will adopt in their future teaching practices. Table 2 illustrates how their responses differ when defining their conception of language and when expressing their perception of the program's concept.

Table 2 <i>Concept of Language</i>		
Participant	Questions and Answers	
	Q. For you, what is language?	Q.3 Considering your experience in this program, how do you perceive the program's conception of language?
Gabriela	It is the code used by the people of a society to express their needs, opinions, and feelings regarding the interpretation they give to reality.	[...] they visualize language as a tool to converse or give an account of our position on many topics of interest and the way in which it can shape our identity.
Javier	For me, language is the code or order used by a certain population to communicate.	I believe that language is considered an important aspect, but that it must be learned implicitly. It is as the means to deal with critical aspects that are given more relevance.
Raúl	A system of communication between a society determined by several characteristics that involves interaction and perhaps development of the individual's identity.	What the program has allowed me to see is to think of language as a possibility to interact between different cultures, to recognize the different dynamics between each of them but also similarities, rather than a barrier between different niches of social interaction [...].

Note. The table shows the results of the Concept of language. Own creation.

In accordance with the educational objectives outlined in the EPP, critical perspectives “imply the imperative of nurturing prospective educators who are cognizant of the social milieu within which language instruction occurs, and who are equipped to address the attendant tensions through transformative pedagogies” (Escuela de Idiomas, 2022, p. 30, our translation). This implies that pre-service teachers are cultivating a teaching identity that leads them to acknowledge the social context of their students, their exigencies, and interests. However, it is not apparent that they envisage employing pedagogical and didactic strategies beyond language instruction, i.e., transformative strategies.

Considering their perceptions towards the construction of their identity as future teachers, the participants highlighted the political role of education. On the one hand, some participants showed evidence of having a broad perception of education, not positioning themselves as language teachers. This trend was evident when pre-service teachers answered question # 18 about their perception of the scope of critical perspectives in foreign language teacher education. As some participants stated:

“I would consider the scope to be quite high or significant, as developing critical perspectives, no matter what language they are done in, will always provide better and stronger results in teacher education” (Marco, Question 18, survey).

“A lot [the scope], having an impact on many people's minds can change the world. That is the purpose of education” (Julieta, Question 18, survey).

“I think the main role of a teacher is to be a social agent. Education is fundamental in social change, and it is important that we as teachers promote change and social criticism” (Héctor, Question 18, survey).

On the other hand, other participants questioned the scope regarding language learning or language proficiency within the framework of critical perspectives in the responses to the same question and to question # 19, which aimed to explore how they assessed the way the program meets the objective of educating teachers with a wide knowledge of the language, as illustrated by the following citations.

“I think they can be very useful to transform society with the help of languages. The question is, do we pre-service teachers have a high knowledge of the language?” (Rafael, Question 18, survey).

“I think it is possible. It is necessary to keep in mind that linguistic knowledge and social reflections should be leveled by providing reinforcement spaces in teacher education and at the same time in phonetic and grammatical aspects so that teachers maintain a constant growth in the linguistic level, without losing the social essence that should characterize this profession” (Clara, Question 18, survey).

To conclude, the participants, both teacher educators and pre-service teachers, remarked that critical perspectives provide the opportunity to view language to bring discussions to the classroom, to problematize social issues, to reflect upon the power of languages, especially English, to recognize the value of one’s own culture and that of others. Also, they considered that this approach fosters didactic and pedagogical strategies based on the construction of learning, while they inquired about the students’ context and motivated them to explore their identity and role in society, as the following answers show:

“I think it makes us, pre-service teachers, consider the role of students’ identity and knowledge, as well as the role they play in their communities and in society. It also motivates the idea that students do not replicate knowledge but create their own” (Mario, Question 4, Survey).

“Its role lies in the reasoning of what is beyond languages, to see them not only as a linguistic system, but as a human construction in which aspects such as power, culture and politics play a fundamental role” (Silvia, Question 4, Survey).

“It is quite useful, as most languages are linked to a discourse of power and/or have a story to tell through them. Through a language many -isms can be transmitted (racism, sexism, etc.), so learning must be done consciously, stopping these discourses while learning or teaching.” (Adrian, Q.4, Survey).

Perceptions of Teaching and Learning English through Critical Perspectives

In this section, we focus on the learning and teaching process that the pre-service teachers have experienced in this program. We identified that the participants described their perceptions from their feelings and emotions that emerge throughout the English courses. Moreover, students expressed their concerns regarding the instruction on linguistic aspects. Lastly, another paramount finding for this study is that there seems to be an understanding of the concept of the word ‘critical’ as a cognitive process.

Considering that critical perspectives have been recently introduced into foreign language

teaching and learning, one of the questions in the survey was directed at knowing about the participants' process of adaptation to these ways of education that aim for a more just society. The table below illustrates divided opinions regarding the polarity of emotions that emerged from the different ways in which students experienced this process.

Table 3.

Pre-service Teachers' Feelings and Emotions towards the Learning of English

Positive Sentiments	Negative Sentiments
It [adaptation] was easy, because fortunately, I had a good process of learning English in school. So, in this program, it was just a matter of understanding those elements I learned in school. I could use them to talk about complex topics or express myself regarding current and important issues. (Rafael, Question 7, Survey).	Initially, it was a bit complex and curious, as it breaks with the traditional teaching practices we are used to, which meant a feeling of not being prepared for the course because of what was initially expected from us. Sometimes I felt frustration, which little by little changed, and by level two it became a little more bearable; I could even say that it pushed me in the development of it [my learning process]. (Antonio, Question 7, Survey)
It was a new experience, although a pleasant one for me. I was used to the basics (reading, writing, and speaking), but I consider that teaching languages with a more critical approach not only allows greater contact with the language but also gives us access to another culture and gives us a more critical way of seeing the world from other perspectives (Hector, Question 7, Survey).	Very difficult, specifically concerning the language itself, it was very hard to understand what the teachers were saying, and even nowadays I see great difficulties, but it is possible to overcome (Victor, Question 7, Survey).
Personally, it was refreshing because I already had a previous level of English, but I can understand how challenging it can be for a person who does not (Julieta, Question 7, Survey).	It was complex, as I felt that I was developing as a critical social agent, but at the same time I was progressing very slowly in my English skills, I am a student who learns mainly with grammar lessons and explicit Linguistics in general. (Adrian, Question 7, Survey).

Note. The table shows the perceptions related to the English learning process. Own creation.

The initial perceptions were highly divided; however, what is evident and noteworthy is the fact that most students who experienced this process positively emphasized having prior knowledge or experience in English. Conversely, students with less positive experiences attributed it to a lack of basic language competence. Consistent with this idea, students voiced their concerns regarding the instruction of linguistic aspects of English. For instance, some of them expressed:

“I, for example, perceive that many of my classmates and I can talk about many complex and diverse topics, but we make many mistakes in the construction of the messages, and we even say things that are not what we want to express just because we do not know how to do it” (Rafael, Question 15, Survey).

“The explicit linguistic learning part (grammar, phonetics, etc.) can be neglected. There can also

be disagreements between students and teachers or among the students themselves because of their different positions and socio-cultural backgrounds. It can also be a repetitive approach if the material to be implemented is not carefully analyzed and chosen” (Adrian, Question 15, Survey).

Within the perception of teaching through the critical perspectives being implemented in this program, students delve into socio-cultural aspects in their discourse and observe a disregard for explicit instruction on linguistic aspects, including grammar. This approach may produce anxiety among certain students due to the unconventional way English is taught. In contrast, a significant portion of the surveyed students accentuate that this teaching approach, from this perspective, motivates them to construct their knowledge, defining the concept of language they perceive not only as a tool for communication but also as an instrument of transformation.

Considering these perceptions of students and what the EPP proposes in this regard, we make evident a different understanding of the linguistic aspects of the language through the critical approach. Within the theoretical considerations of the EPP, teaching is envisaged as the guidance provided to students to utilize language in comprehending the social functions embedded in grammatical structures and lexical repertoires, thereby enabling them to engage in a process of problematizing societal and global dynamics. Similarly, drawing from the theoretical framework informing this study, Reagan and Osborn (2020) conceptualize teaching as a process that acknowledges the student’s ongoing reconstruction of themselves as social beings and their evolving worldview, necessitating the incorporation of linguistic aspects or lexical-grammatical components of language to attain learning objectives.

In terms of their understanding of the “critical”, the data collected from pre-service teachers suggest a superficial understanding of what being critical means, and mainly related to critical thinking. For instance, Gabriela stated the following when asked about their adaptation to a critical pedagogy curriculum:

“I feel that I had a good process of adaptation because in my school they used a similar methodology, making debates, presentations, and other activities that allowed me to discuss various current issues. I have also had the opportunity since I was a child to use different textbooks in class to give my opinion on the subject and to do activities that allow me to develop critical thinking through writing and speaking” (Question 7, Survey).

In critical perspectives’ principles, the concept of ‘critical thinking’ transcends its conventional understanding as a cognitive process aimed at enhancing reasoning and argumentation skills, characterized by a vertically dialectical and decontextualized interaction between students and educators. Here, critical thinking entails a critical reflection that acknowledges reality as socially constructed, thus emphasizing the imperative for informed action with transformative and emancipatory aims (Fernandez-Balboa, 2014).

This result shows a need to clearly explain to pre-service teachers the principles of critical perspectives and how they will experience the teaching and learning process in the classrooms.

Conclusions

The teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language is a complex and multi-faceted endeavor, influenced by various factors such as educational policies, teaching methodologies, classroom environment, teacher-student dynamics, and students' individual characteristics and experiences. These factors can impact the effectiveness and success of English language instruction; thus, educators should critically examine and evaluate their practices to promote meaningful and transformative learning experiences for students.

Furthermore, understanding students' attitudes towards learning a foreign language and their initial experiences can shed light on their motivations, expectations, and potential challenges. By critically examining and addressing these factors, educators can better tailor their teaching approaches and strategies to meet the diverse needs and goals of their students. Consistent with what the pre-service teachers' survey data showed, negotiations between teacher educators and pre-service teachers about their needs at the language level may take place so that the process is productive for both parties.

For doing so, teacher education requires a solid foundation to provide quality instruction. As most pre-service teachers reiterated, the need to balance education between the principles of critical perspectives and the linguistic components of language as a system, grammar, and phonetics, for instance, stands out as crucial to achieve a high proficiency level in the language. They suggested that it should not be limited to an exclusive grammar and phonetics course, but it should focus on students' development of skills aligned with a more critical view towards language as an ideology, thus delving into the power dynamics reflected in the speakers' choices, and providing an opportunity to promote the principles of a more just society.

Moreover, teacher educators are to continuously enhance their own language proficiency and pedagogical skills to provide effective and engaging instruction. This is a challenge that the participant teacher educators mentioned during the data collection stage of our study, even though all of them had several years of experience teaching in different settings, including educating pre-service teachers. By adopting a reflexive perspective, teachers can identify areas for improvement, incorporate innovative teaching techniques, and create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that empowers students to actively participate and excel in their language journey.

Overall, the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language through critical perspectives takes into consideration factors such as educational policies, teaching methodologies, classroom environment, teacher-student dynamics, and students' individual characteristics and experiences.

Statement of originality

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

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Conflicts of interest

We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

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Author Contributions

Lorena Zapata Arias: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Supervision, Validation, Investigation, Visualization, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Project administration, Writing – review and editing.

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	Modality	Fee	
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	Online:	\$310.000 COP c/u (\$100 USD)	
	(+ Membership)	\$360.000 COP c/u (\$116 USD)	
	Teachers and other professionals		
	Modality	Fee	
		5 to 10 people	More than 11 people
	In-person:	\$250.000 COP c/u (\$83 USD)	\$240.000 COP c/u (\$80 USD)
	(+ Membership)	\$300.000 COP (\$99 USD)	\$290.000 COP (\$96 USD)
	Online:	\$310.000 COP c/u (\$100 USD)	
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Enhancing Writing Engagement in the EFL Context: Social Media Intervention Using Instagram

Fortalecimiento de la Participación en la Escritura
en el Contexto del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera
Mediante una Intervención Pedagógica con
Instagram

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Abstract

This article presents a perspective on how Instagram was used as a pedagogical tool to enhance a group of Chilean students' engagement in EFL writing. This qualitative study involved eight third-year students from a higher education institution in Chile. The data tools included pre- and post-intervention tests, an analytic rubric, two Likert scale surveys, and a focus group. The results showed a significant difference between the participants' pre- and post-intervention test scores. Additionally, the findings highlighted the positive impact of Instagram on the different writing engagement dimensions assessed: affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social dimensions. As a conclusion, teachers may consider incorporating Instagram as an effective pedagogical tool into their teaching strategies to create more enjoyable and relevant tasks and to enhance the students' level of writing engagement in more contextualized communicative situations, which can be significant for them.

Keywords: EFL writing, Instagram, pedagogical tool, writing engagement, writing engagement

Resumen

Este artículo presenta una perspectiva del uso de Instagram como una herramienta pedagógica para mejorar el compromiso de un grupo de estudiantes chilenos en la escritura del inglés como lengua extranjera en Chile. Este estudio cualitativo involucró a ocho estudiantes de tercer año de una institución de educación superior en Chile. Los datos se obtuvieron por medio de pruebas de intervención pre y post, junto con una rúbrica analítica, dos escalas Likert y un grupo focal. Los resultados mostraron una diferencia significativa entre los puntajes de los participantes en las pruebas de intervención pre y post. Además, los hallazgos resaltaron que Instagram tuvo un impacto positivo en las diferentes dimensiones del *engagement* evaluadas en la escritura. Es decir, dimensiones afectivas, conductuales, cognitivas y sociales. En conclusión, los profesores podrían considerar la inclusión de Instagram como una herramienta pedagógica efectiva en sus estrategias de enseñanza para crear actividades más atractivas y relevantes y fomentar el compromiso de los estudiantes en tareas de escritura relacionadas con situaciones comunicativas contextualizadas y significativas para ellos.

Palabras clave: escritura, herramienta pedagógica, inglés, Instagram, lengua extranjera

Résumé

Cet article présente une perspective sur l'utilisation d'Instagram comme outil pédagogique pour améliorer l'engagement d'un groupe d'étudiants chiliens dans l'écriture de l'anglais comme langue étrangère au Chili. Cette étude qualitative a porté sur huit étudiants de troisième année d'un établissement d'enseignement supérieur au Chili. Les données ont été obtenues à l'aide de tests pré et post-intervention, ainsi que d'une grille d'évaluation analytique, de deux échelles de Likert et d'un groupe de discussion. Les résultats ont montré une différence significative entre les scores des participants aux tests pré et post-intervention. En outre, les résultats ont souligné qu'Instagram avait un impact positif sur les différentes dimensions de l'engagement évaluées dans l'écriture. C'est-à-dire les dimensions affectives, comportementales, cognitives et sociales. En conclusion, les enseignants pourraient envisager d'inclure Instagram comme un outil pédagogique efficace dans leurs stratégies d'enseignement afin de créer des activités plus attrayantes et pertinentes et d'encourager l'engagement des élèves dans des tâches d'écriture liées à des situations de communication contextualisées et significatives pour eux.

Mots clés : écriture, outil pédagogique, anglais, Instagram, langue étrangère

Resumo

Esse artigo apresenta uma perspectiva do uso do Instagram como uma ferramenta pedagógica para melhorar o compromisso dum grupo de estudantes chilenos na escrita do inglês como língua estrangeira no Chile. Esse estudo qualitativo envolveu oito estudantes de terceiro ano numa instituição de educação superior no Chile. Os dados foram coletados por meio de provas de intervenção pré e pós. Junto com uma rubrica analítica, dois escalas Likert e um grupo focal. Os resultados mostraram uma diferença significativa entre as pontuações dos participantes entre as provas pre y post. Além disso, as constatações ressaltaram que o Instagram teve um impacto positivo nas diferentes dimensões afetivas, comportamentais, cognitivas e sociais. Em conclusão, os professores poderiam considerar a inclusão do Instagram como uma ferramenta pedagógica efetiva nas suas estratégias de ensino para criar atividades mais atrativas, relevantes e fomentar o compromisso dos estudantes em tarefas de escrita relacionadas com situações comunicativas contextualizadas e significativas para eles.

Palavras chave: Escrita, ferramenta pedagógica, inglês, Instagram, língua estrangeira.

Introduction

In a globalized world, where English is considered a lingua franca, “the need to master it confidently requires knowledge of the target language as well as the development of strategies and language skills” (Fodil-Cherif, 2021, p. 1). In this regard, without a doubt, the writing skill development is occasionally left behind because of its complexity. Hidayati (2018) claims that “teaching writing skill in English, which involves developing linguistic and communicative competence of learners, is considered a challenge” (p. 21), and therefore it causes students’ reluctance to get engaged in writing, leading to fatigue, decrease in motivation, failure, high level of anxiety, less effort, low interest (Şenel, 2018). Considering these factors, teachers must adopt effective strategies aimed at fostering students’ engagement and confidence in writing.

In the context of the Chilean tertiary education system, the development of writing skills is essential for both academic and professional growth. To accomplish these language proficiency objectives, every Chilean higher educational institution should follow its own specific subject syllabus to develop this skill effectively and set specific proficiency levels of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001). However, in the Chilean EFL classrooms, limited exposure to writing tasks hinders educators from effectively improving students’ writing skills, leading to insufficient focus on this skill development.

This is the case of a group of third-year students enrolled in an Intermediate English course at a Chilean higher education institution, where the teacher-researcher worked, who were expected to achieve an A2-B1 proficiency level (CEFR) according to their Intermediate English course syllabus. These students appeared highly motivated to learn the English language, but they demonstrated a reluctant attitude towards the development of writing skills, which was reflected in their poor academic achievement in written assignments. Their reluctance was evident in their average writing scores, which were consistently below passing marks. Moreover, when given a writing task, many students hesitated to start and frequently left assignments incomplete. These struggles stemmed from finding writing assignments intimidating and experiencing a feeling of failure that impeded the appropriate development of their writing ability.

To deal with these learners’ reluctant attitude and their low level of academic achievement in the writing assignments, this action research study sought to examine the contribution of the social network Instagram as a pedagogical tool to enhance third-year higher education students’ writing engagement in writing captions.

Conceptual Framework

The Development of Writing Skills in the EFL Context

Learning a foreign language implies developing different skills to master the language confidently. Thus, language learners must focus on the development of receptive skills: listening and reading, as well as productive skills: speaking and writing. While all four skills are essential, writing

plays a crucial role in academic and professional success. According to Fodil-Cherif (2021), “writing is considered to be the most needed skill in academic and professional contexts” (p. 1). In other words, writing serves as a vital form of communication, allowing writers to convey their emotions, ideas, and arguments. Beyond its communicative function, Klimova (2013) highlights that “writing as a productive skill helps to express one’s personality, foster communication, develop thinking skills, make logical and persuasive arguments, give a person a chance to later reflect on his/her ideas, prepare for school/employment, and provide and receive feedback” (p. 9). This underscores the multifaceted nature of writing, positioning it not only as a tool for expression but also as a key cognitive and professional skill.

Although writing is a crucial skill for acquiring any language, it is the most challenging skill in the language learning process (Rao, 2019, p. 199). Therefore, it causes students to show reluctance to get engaged in writing assignments. This brings about students who give up just before starting to write or postpone the task since writing encompasses a multitude of processes to reach the final product (Fodil-Cherif, 2021, p. 2). Nonetheless, Şenel (2018) suggests that when students and teachers are highly motivated to write, the writing lessons become more pleasurable, thereby improving academic achievements, and mitigating negative factors such as anxiety, fear of failure, and reluctance to write.

Despite these challenges, writing offers numerous advantages for English language learners. Rao (2019) points out that writing facilitates the development of learners’ critical thinking abilities. Additionally, it serves as a means of retrieving old and almost forgotten memories while encouraging learners to express their thoughts and opinions effectively. As a result, writing empowers learners to develop their cognitive abilities, reflect on their experiences, and effectively communicate their ideas to others.

Writing in the Chilean EFL Context

In the Chilean educational system, English is a compulsory subject taught from the fifth grade of primary education until students finish their secondary education. Therefore, the four language skills are expected to be achieved in this national context, and students should reach a B2 proficiency level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. According to the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2016), writing skills development emphasizes “developing these abilities in simple and contextualized communicative situations that are personally relevant and have clear purposes” (p. 48). In higher education in Chile, students are expected to produce a variety of texts while following the steps of the writing process, as mentioned by Fodil-Cherif (2021), these steps may include planning, drafting, and revising.

The Multidimensional Nature of Writing Engagement in the Classroom

Student engagement significantly contributes to fostering learners’ positive attitudes and behaviors among students, as well as enhancing their academic success and increasing a sense of ownership over their learning process (Oliveira, 2012). According to Abubakar et al. (2017), the level of students’ engagement is commonly regarded as one of the most accurate indicators of learning and personal development. Therefore, promoting learners’ positive attitudes, behaviors, and academic

success is essential, considering the growing need for intrinsic motivation and meaningful connections within the learning environment.

In today's educational context, the notion of writing engagement has gained relevant attention among teachers who make a great effort to enhance and develop their students' writing abilities and boost their involvement in different writing activities. Ives et al. (2022) present writing engagement as a multidimensional construct including affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social components with the potential to support students at all stages of the writing process in equitable and culturally responsive ways. Additionally, this construct influences one's intentional and thoughtful involvement in writing-related activity (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). By recognizing writing engagement as a multidimensional construct, it is possible to get a deeper understanding of the complex factors that influence an individual's active, meaningful, and purposeful involvement in writing-related activities that would eventually lead to enhanced writing experiences and outcomes.

The Role of Technology in Increasing Students' Writing Engagement

In this new, more modernized and digital world, new technologies, activities, and ways to communicate have emerged, and educators have implemented them in the classroom to create a more engaging learning environment. Technological advancements offer plenty of possibilities to make teaching engaging and enhance productivity in terms of improvements. Accordingly, Ruggiero and Mong (2015) mention that teachers appeared to value the availability of technology as a powerful tool for enhancing education and making it more authentic for the students. Moreover, Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020) emphasize that integrating technology into the classroom enhances learning experiences and promotes a student-centered methodology by creating an environment that prioritizes students' needs, interests, and active participation.

The authors state that writing tasks inside the classroom often lack connection with real-life activities relevant to students. Therefore, grabbing students' interest in writing tasks beyond the classroom can foster their engagement, as they can address specific target audiences and establish a meaningful link between their writing and their own experiences. Accordingly, Kelly (2015) states that Instagram emerges as a technological tool with the potential to boost students' writing engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as it offers a platform for students to actively participate and connect their writing to the broader world. Hence, Instagram offers students opportunities and support to refine and develop their writing skills. By using this platform, teachers can access its full potential to enhance students' writing skills and create a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

Social Network Instagram as a Valuable Pedagogical Tool

Instagram has become extremely popular nowadays, with an average of two billion monthly active users worldwide (Dixon, 2024). Sharing information on this free social media app has turned out to be incredibly meaningful for the users, considering that they can reach anybody, anywhere in the world. It has proved to be a new form of communication using videos and pictures. Its numerous technical features such as hashtags, geotags, stories, reels, and interactive stickers (e.g., polls, questions,

and quizzes), are motivating for users since they can create filters, upload photos, add descriptions, and share live videos with friends (Hu et al., 2014). Moreover, Instagram is a tool that offers accessibility to a wide range of users. Therefore, it may be effectively integrated into language learning activities (Prasetyawati & Ardi, 2020). On this ground, writing skills can be exploited effectively through this social media. Supporting this idea, a study carried out by Sirait and Marlina (2018) clearly states that Instagram is a convenient, easy-to-use, and accessible tool. Similarly, Khalitova (2016) argues that Instagram serves as a language learning resource that is readily accessible to students quickly and conveniently, primarily through its mobile application.

Shazali et al. (2019) concluded, in their action research study on the topic of using Instagram, that this social networking site “helps in developing students’ writing ability in terms of new vocabulary and it boosts their motivation too” (p. 96). Furthermore, writing captions on Instagram helps students express their opinions, feelings, and even motivates others to write well. Therefore, they feel greater authenticity and a clear purpose than doing the traditional written tasks (Kelly, 2015). These positive attitudes towards Instagram are because “it provides a meaningful and fun learning environment for the students as they are comfortable using Instagram in completing school tasks” (Shazali et al., 2019, p. 97).

According to Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020), writing tasks within the classroom are disconnected from activities that students experience outside the classroom, which are more closely aligned with their real-life situations. This aspect adds a unique dimension to the development of students’ writing engagement and their skills, aligning with the modernized and digitalized ways of communication in the globalized era.

In general terms, Instagram can be an excellent pedagogical tool in the process of teaching the English language, especially in “engaging students in writing tasks if used and supervised appropriately” (Shazali et al., 2019, p. 97).

Method

The current investigation corresponds to an action research study since it is a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring our own teaching contexts as defined by Burns (2010).

Research Objectives

The objectives were (1) to describe students’ writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts, and (2) to analyze students’ perceptions of their writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts.

To accomplish these objectives, the study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyze data, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and aiding in answering the research question.

Participants

This study involved a convenience sample of eight participants, aged 20 to 25, who were

enrolled in an intermediate-level English course from a Chilean higher education institution. The sample consisted of two males and six females, none of whom was a native English language speaker. The sample corresponded to a homogeneous group in terms of age, location, and English language proficiency. In the English classes, these students were expected to write short texts related to everyday life activities in social and professional contexts. They had been exposed to the English language for four semesters with English classes four times a week in sessions of one hour and twenty minutes each. Participants seemed to be highly motivated to learn the language; however, they had a reluctant attitude towards writing skills, which led them to perform poorly in their assignments. They were very enthusiastic when it came to the use of technology in the classroom, and they made use of technological gadgets to take notes and work in every class.

Research Procedure

To implement the intervention, six 80-minute sessions were planned. Sessions are described below:

Table 1.

Action Plan Design

Session	Learning objective	Activities	Data collection instrument
Pre-intervention session	To set a baseline for participants' writing engagement.	- Introducing the main aspects of this study, completing the instruments.	- Analytic rubric - Writing engagement Likert scale
1	To identify the elements of an Instagram caption from examples provided by the teacher.	- Introducing writing engagement and Instagram as a learning resource tool. - Introducing the elements of an Instagram caption and identifying them in the provided examples. - Identifying the elements of a caption from a post that students have created. - Summarizing key points on Jamboard.	
2		- Accessing students' first session prior knowledge. - Exploring image captions on posts provided by the teacher. - Writing a caption. - Posting on Instagram and reflecting on the development of writing engagement.	

3	To write a description of an image on the social networking site Instagram.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessing students' prior knowledge on writing engagement and the contribution of Instagram. - Reflecting on a classmate's post to identify the elements included in their captions. - Writing a caption. - Posting on Instagram. - Reflecting on the activities and the process. 	
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing the usefulness of Instagram to develop writing engagement. - Reflecting on a classmate's post to identify the elements included in their captions. - Writing a caption. - Posting on Instagram. - Completing the Likert scale. - Reflecting on the process of writing captions on Instagram to develop writing engagement. 	Writing engagement Likert scale
Post-intervention session	- To assess participants' writing engagement	- The last written task, which was first written on the template, was also used as the post-intervention test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytic rubric - Focus group

Note: Own work.

Data Collection Instruments

Participants were informed about Instagram's safety recommendations and privacy policies. They were advised to avoid sharing personal information. Additionally, they provided informed consent, ensuring their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and that the collected data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

Regarding data analysis techniques, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the main findings from the pre- and post-intervention tests. Moreover, a thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the focus group, and the Likert scale was analyzed through measures of dispersion.

Pre- and post-intervention tests (See Appendix 1) were 60-word writing tasks that required the participants to describe an image in hard copy. The first task aimed at setting the baseline of participants' writing performance before the intervention. The post-intervention test aimed at identifying the students' writing engagement through the contribution of Instagram for writing captions. The post-intervention test was posted on Instagram, as it was also considered to be the third written activity. The teacher-researcher corrected and graded these intervention tests using an analytic rubric.

An analytic rubric was used to assess the students' intervention tests. It was adapted from the institution where the teacher-researcher worked and where this study was conducted. It was written in Spanish for this action research. This instrument was validated since it had been used at another higher education institution in Chile. The rubric considered the following four criteria with a two-point score for each descriptor:

1. The student expresses ideas according to the level.
2. The student uses vocabulary according to the level.
3. The student follows instructions to write the text according to the level
4. The student writes an original text according to the level.

The score for each descriptor ranged from not achieved (0), needs improvement (0.6), partially achieved (1.2), achieved (1.6), and totally achieved (2).

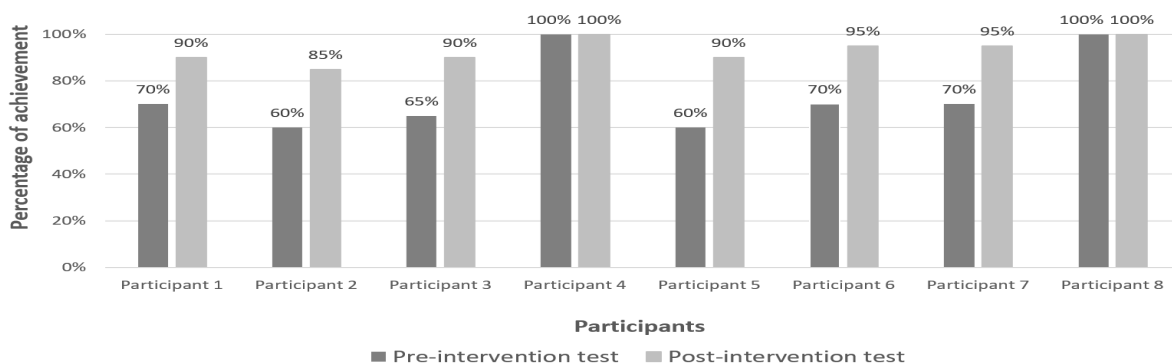
A Likert scale perception survey (See Appendix 2) was applied two times to obtain insight into participants' perceptions of their writing engagement. It was applied at the beginning, in the pre-intervention session, and in session No. 4 after using Instagram. This Likert scale survey had eleven statements categorized into the four writing engagement dimensions: Affective Writing Engagement (AWE), Behavioral Writing Engagement (BWE), Cognitive Writing Engagement (CWE), and Social Writing Engagement (SWE). The statements for the four dimensions were adapted from Rogers et al. (2022, p. 268). The items in this scale were organized into a four-level Likert scale, which went from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

A focus group session (Appendix 3), comprising seven open questions that covered the four dimensions of the writing engagement, was conducted during the post-intervention session. This Focus group was used to collect and analyze qualitative data on students' perceptions of their writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts. On this ground, this instrument appeared to be adequate as it is defined by Krueger and Casey (2015) as a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on an area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.

Findings

Participants' overall performance percentages in the pre- and post-intervention tests before and after the intervention are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Participants' Performance in Their Writing Tests before and after the Intervention



Upon examining the data presented in Figure 1, a noticeable trend emerged when comparing the participants' outcomes of the pre- and post-intervention tests. Specifically, it became evident that six (75%) out of the eight participants demonstrated an increase in their results, while the remaining two participants (25%) kept the same results, which corresponded to the maximum score. The improvement observed among the six participants could be attributed to a higher level of writing engagement, potentially resulting from the posts they created, which were uploaded onto the social network Instagram. Regarding the mean scores and standard deviation obtained from both tests, Table 2 provides a quantitative summary of the data.

Table 2.

Overall Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Test Results

Task	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Pre-intervention test	8	4.8	8	5.95	1.31
Post- intervention test	8	6.80	8	7.45	0.42

As can be seen in Table 2, in the pre-intervention test, participants achieved a mean score of 5.95, which corresponds to an average percentage of achievement equivalent to 74%. As for the post-intervention test, participants obtained a mean score of 7.45, resulting in an average percentage of achievement of 93%. Based on the results, there was an increase of 1.5 points in the participants' mean score after using Instagram for posting their writings. This 25.7% increase may indicate a higher level of writing engagement due to the use of Instagram throughout the intervention.

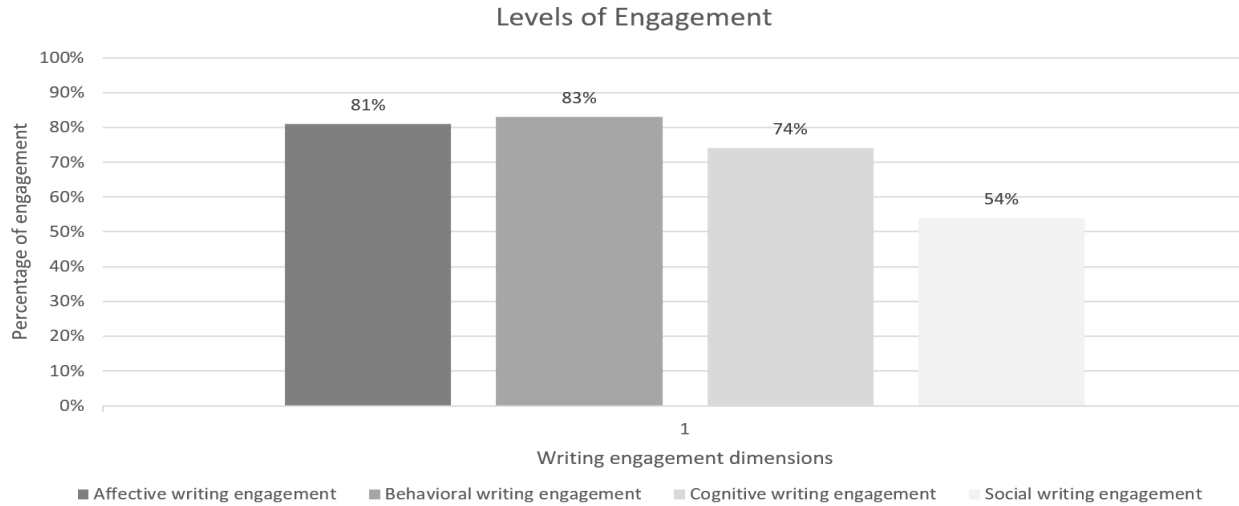
The lower standard deviation in the post-intervention test (0.42) suggested a reduction in data variability or dispersion. It indicates a more uniform or homogeneous score distribution across the evaluated criteria and implies that the students' scores in the post-intervention test were more tightly clustered around the mean score compared to the pre-intervention test. With reduced variability, the mean score became a more reliable indicator of the students' achievement, as there was less influence from extreme or outlier scores.

The results of the Likert scale 1 were focused on the participants' writing engagement scores across the four dimensions assessed: affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social writing engagement. The scores and percentages indicated that students displayed the highest levels of engagement in the affective and behavioral dimensions, scoring 81% and 83%, respectively. Additionally, the cognitive (CWE) and social dimensions (SWE) of writing engagement scored the lowest levels, 74% and 54%, respectively. These results were observed at the outset of the intervention.

Despite the reported scores of 81% for AWE and 74% for CWE, these dimensions also had the highest standard deviation values of 2.05 and 2.17, respectively, indicating that participants' responses varied more widely compared to the behavioral (BWE) and social writing engagement (SWE) dimensions. Figure 2 presents the global percentages, including the maximum and minimum values, offering an overview of the range of engagement levels observed across all dimensions in the Likert scale 1.

Figure 2.

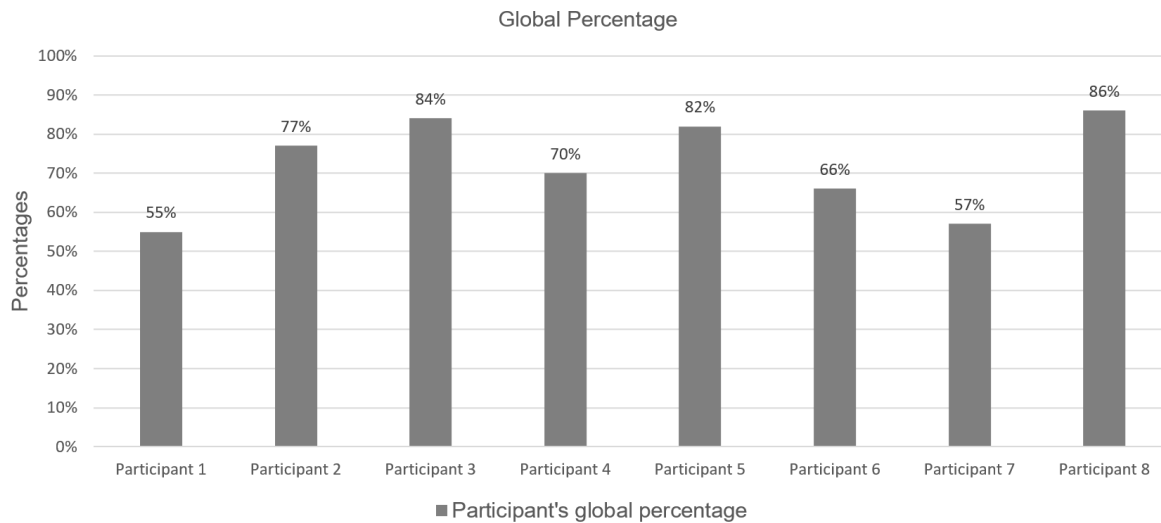
Participants' Overall Writing Engagement Percentages by Dimensions



It is observed that the behavioral writing engagement (BWE) was the highest dimension with 83%, followed by the affective dimension (AWE) (81%), and the social dimension (SWE) was the one with the lowest percentage (54%). These findings suggest that participants in this context exhibited some emphasis on behavioral aspects, such as participation, effort, and persistence in their writing engagement. However, the low percentage in the social dimension points to challenges faced by participants in terms of collaboration, interaction, and engagement in social activities related to writing, such as sharing ideas and participating collaboratively in writing tasks. Figure 3 shows the participants' global level of writing engagement in their writing activities.

Figure 3.

Global Writing Engagement Percentage Per Participant Likert Scale 1

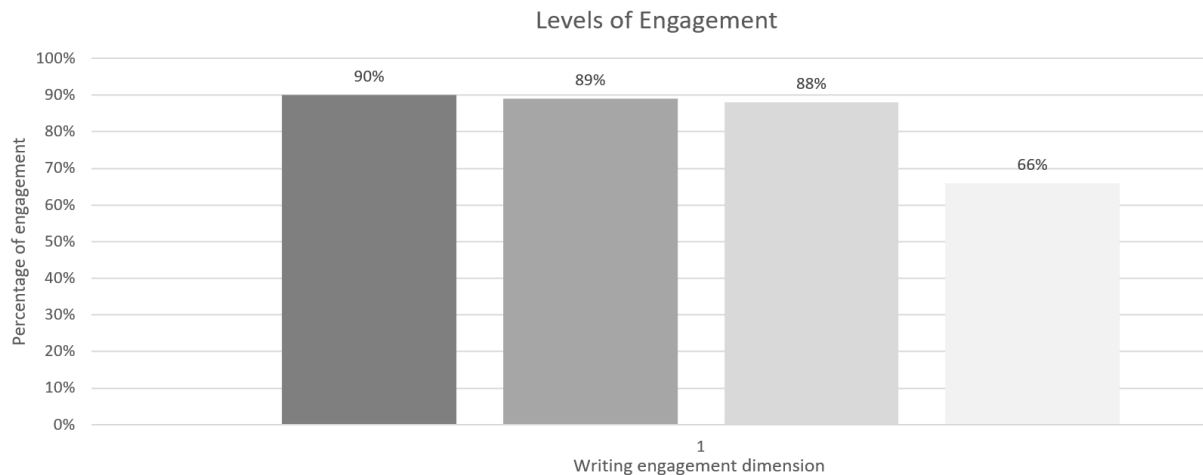


This figure shows that participants 3 and 8 exhibited the highest levels of engagement, 84% and 86% respectively, while participant 1 demonstrated the lowest level with 55%. Participants' engagement levels varied significantly, ranging from 55% to 86%, suggesting diverse levels of engagement among participants in the writing tasks. These results are depicted before the use of the social network Instagram.

The results of the Likert scale 2 revealed that students exhibited noticeably higher levels of writing engagement in the affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions compared to the Likert scale 1 scores. The social dimension (SWE) displayed a moderate level of engagement at 66%. However, this percentage showed an increase compared to the Likert scale results obtained initially. Figure 4 provides an overview of the participants' global percentages per dimension.

Figure 4.

Global Engagement Percentages by Dimensions



Notably, the percentages for the affective, behavioral, and cognitive writing engagement dimensions were tightly clustered, with high levels of engagement at 90%, 89%, and 88%, respectively. This may indicate a consistent and strong level of engagement in writing among the participants in these three dimensions at the end of the intervention, which can be explained using Instagram for uploading posts. This could be attributed to the idea that Instagram enables students to relate their writing tasks to real-life experiences. Therefore, using the social network Instagram may have helped students experience a higher level of commitment, a sense of authenticity, and a meaningful purpose when they wrote their captions rather than when they did their traditional writing activities, which were only revised by the teacher and were not published or posted anywhere.

The social dimension (SWE) displayed a lower writing engagement level of 66%. Although slightly lower, this engagement level was still higher than what was observed in the previous Likert scale survey. Figure 5 provides insights into the varying levels of writing engagement among the respondents at the end of the intervention, which emerged from the second Likert scale.

Figure 5.

Global Engagement Percentages by Dimensions

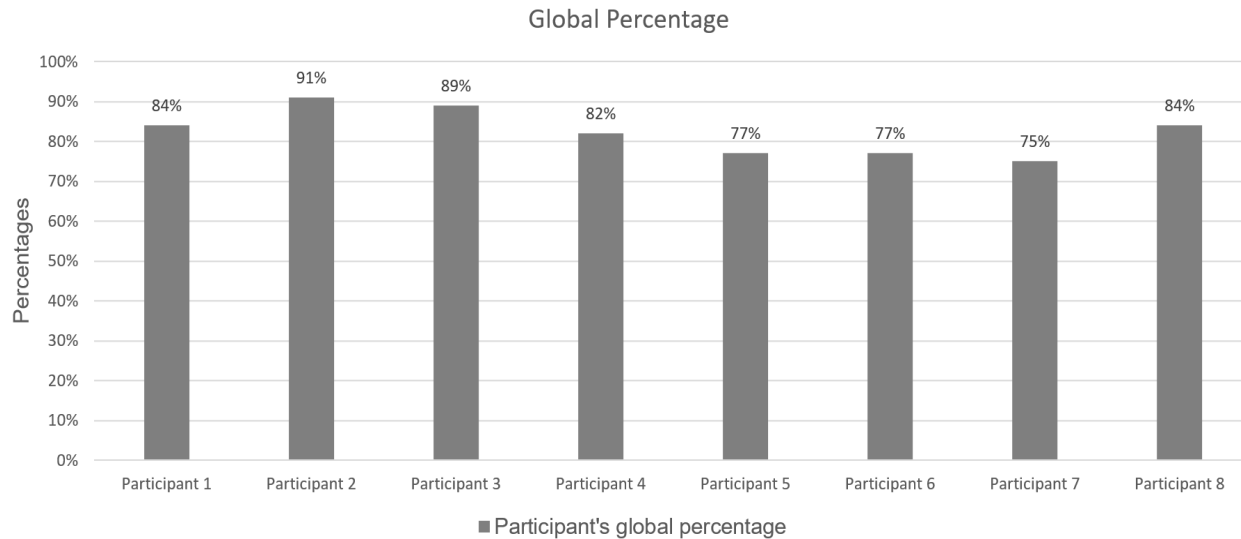


Figure 5 shows that participant 2 exhibited the highest level of engagement with 91%, indicating a strong involvement in the statements assessed. Participants 1, 3, and 8 achieved percentages of 84%, 89%, and 84%, respectively, suggesting a high level of engagement as well. Participants 4, 5, 6, and 7 exhibited slightly lower writing engagement levels with percentages ranging from 75% to 82%. While their engagement levels are somewhat lower compared to the other participants, they still indicated a moderate level of engagement in writing.

Regarding the comparison between the two Likert scale survey results, Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the writing engagement across two measurement points: the beginning and end of the intervention. The table provides insights into the participants' overall writing engagement levels within the four dimensions assessed: AWE, BWE, CWE, and SWE.

Table 3.

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Writing Engagement Likert Scales

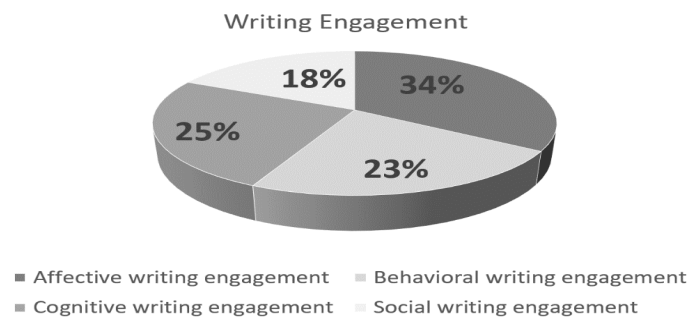
Engagement	Likert scale 1		Likert scale 2			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
AWE	9,75	81%	2,05	10,75	90%	1,16
BWE	6,63	83%	1,51	7,13	89%	1,13
CWE	8,88	74%	2,17	10,5	88%	0,93
SWE	6,50	54%	1,93	7,88	66%	1,25
Global scores in the Likert scales	31,75	72%	5,39	36,25	82%	2,49

Table 3 indicates a rise of 11.2% in students' AWE levels throughout the intervention. For BWE, the mean percentages showed a slight 7.3% increase. In the CWE, there was a considerable 19% increase. Finally, the SWE showed an increase of 22.3%. In summary, Table 3 reveals patterns and changes in the participants' writing engagement levels within each dimension and across the Likert scales throughout the intervention. The findings suggest varying degrees of improvement and consistency, demonstrated by the increase in percentage levels in different dimensions of writing engagement over time, which could be potentially attributed to the use of the social network Instagram to upload posts.

Regarding the focus group, Figure 6 presents the percentages of student references to the four writing engagement dimensions.

Figure 6.

Writing Engagement Per Dimension



It can be observed that the AWE achieved the highest percentage, which meant that participants found emotional satisfaction in using Instagram as a platform for self-expression as well as for enjoyment in sharing personal stories and experiences with a wider audience; the SWE dimension got the lowest score. Although this dimension had consistently been regarded as the one that achieved the lowest levels compared to the others, the results throughout the intervention revealed a significant improvement among the participants, which can be attributed to the use of the social network Instagram.

The thematic analysis results aligned seamlessly with the findings derived from the Likert scale 2 responses, which were achieved after the implementation of Instagram. In essence, this alignment underscores a coherence in the participants' engagement patterns, as identified through these two data collection instruments. On this ground, on the one hand, these instruments indicated that AWE achieved the highest scores since it allowed students to connect their writing tasks to real-world experiences, reflecting the positive emotional connection that they went through when they found writing engaging and personally meaningful.

On the other hand, there were evident signs of progress in the SWE, even though it remained the least emphasized dimension among participants. This social dimension displayed the lowest engagement percentage at 18% compared to the other dimensions, all of which surpassed 23% in the second Likert scale. However, this engagement level showed a 22.3% increase compared to the Likert scale 1. This indicated a noticeable improvement in participants' engagement with the social dimension over time, suggesting the potential for further improvements.

Discussion

The comparison of participants' outcomes of the pre- and post-intervention tests provided valuable insights into the impact of using Instagram as a fundamental pedagogical tool to enhance writing engagement among participants. The increase in the participants' writing scores in the post-intervention test indicated that the use of Instagram can be a powerful motivator for students to improve their engagement in writing. As suggested by Şenel (2018), when students and teachers are highly engaged in writing, the writing lessons become more pleasurable, as a result, improving academic achievements, as in the post-intervention test.

Chilean students must attain English writing proficiency, focusing on skills development in simple, contextually relevant, and personally meaningful communicative situations. The findings of this study are in line with the Chilean EFL context expectations since the Instagram features, such as photo descriptions and captions, encouraged students to apply their writing skills in real-life contexts that are personally significant for them. Consequently, this study indicates that Instagram may serve as a valuable pedagogical tool to increase students' writing engagement, meeting the writing expectations outlined in the Chilean curriculum.

The integration of Instagram has been shown to have an impact on the different writing engagement dimensions:

Affective Writing Engagement

Instagram appeared to have improved AWE, represented by an 11.2% increase throughout the intervention. The findings revealed that integrating Instagram into EFL writing allowed participants to experience a positive emotional connection in writing activities. Instagram enabled them to express themselves, enjoy writing, and share captions. Participant 3 reflected, "*A mí me pareció interesante el tema de la escritura también [...] después, con el transcurso del tiempo nos dimos cuenta de que igual era fácil y, y por lo menos a mí me gustó*" ["I found the topic of writing interesting as well [...] later, over time, we realized it was actually easy, and at least I liked it"] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 1 admitted, "*Yo, no me gusta escribir en inglés, pero le fui agarrando el gusto [...] eso fue soltando más la mano y como ir tomando más vocabulario*" ["I don't like writing in English, but I started to enjoy it [...] it helped me loosen up my writing and pick up more vocabulary"] (own translation).

Additionally, Instagram provided a sense of security and a platform for self-expression. As Participant 2 shared, "*Uno se siente como más segura de poder subir una foto de... hablando, quizás de algún tema personal, algo que quizás nunca lo ha contado ni a sus más cercanos y ocupa la red social como Instagram como para desahogarse*" ["One feels more confident in posting a photo ... perhaps discussing a personal topic, something that may have never been shared even with close ones, using social media like Instagram as a way to vent"] (own translation).

These findings suggest that Instagram can serve as a space for personal satisfaction in writing, contributing to participants' emotional fulfillment and self-expression. Hence, Instagram appeared to be a useful pedagogical tool for students, allowing them to engage in authentic language learning experiences in an environment that emphasizes students' needs and interests. As stated by Kurniawan and Kastuhandani (2016), utilizing Instagram for writing enables students to generate ideas for their

writing tasks with more authentic content, fostering engagement and motivation in their learning process.

Behavioral Writing Engagement

Participants showed a positive result from the first to the second Likert scale with an increase of 7,23%, which leads us to conclude that participants invested effort and demonstrated commitment in producing their captions on Instagram. This is also supported by the students' perceptions in the focus group, where they emphasized having demonstrated extra effort and commitment since their captions would be publicly seen. As mentioned by Maulina (2018), incorporating social media into the language learning context may motivate participants to use the English language to write their captions online, which could be accessed both locally and internationally, thus enhancing their writing ability. In line with this, Shazali et al. (2019) highlighted that Instagram helps students develop their writing ability by expanding their vocabulary and boosting their motivation, too.

The fact that the participants approached the idea of writing on Instagram with the desire to improve their writing skills emphasized the notion that using this social media for writing captions was seen as more than just a casual activity. Thus, when students perceive writing tasks as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to engage deeply in the writing process. As stated by Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020), the integration of Instagram enhances the overall writing experience, creating an interactive environment for students to develop their writing skills and engage.

Cognitive Writing Engagement

The findings presented a 19% increase from the first to the second Likert scale. This suggests an improvement in self-regulation and strategic growth in the study by showing a high level of commitment to the task. As stated by Ives et al. (2022), this active involvement fostered strategic growth, contributing to the enhancement of their writing skills by promoting a positive mindset, fostering consistent practice, and facilitating thoughtful reflection. This was supported by the participants' perceptions in the focus group regarding the strategies used while developing the writing tasks on Instagram, such as rereading, thinking carefully about the word usage, and asking themselves questions to ensure coherence and clarity in their tasks. Thus, these findings implied that the participants recognized the importance of these strategies and actively used them, allowing them to engage more in their written tasks.

Social Writing Engagement

While there was evidence of growth in this dimension, it remained the least emphasized dimension among participants. This social dimension showed the lowest engagement percentage of 66% compared to the other dimensions, which were over 88% in the second Likert scale. However, this dimension showed an increase of 22.3% from the first to the second Likert scale, suggesting there is room for further enhancement in the future.

In the focus group, participants discussed their experiences of overcoming the fear of judgment from others and developing a sense of community through shared writing experiences. Participant 5 stated, *“yo no lo quería compartir porque me daba cosita escribirlo mal, ...ahora no sé, encuentro que puedo llegar igual a hartas personas que están pasando por alguna situación”* [I didn't want to share it because I was worried about writing it incorrectly ... now, I don't know, I feel like I can still reach many people who are going

through a similar situation] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 7 reflected, “*Me sentí más tranquilo que con los textos de los exámenes, siendo que este lo ve más gente*” [I felt calmer than with the writings for exams, even though more people saw this one] (own translation).

Moreover, some participants initially experienced anxiety, but this was limited to the first stages of their writing tasks. Participant 4 stated, “*Al principio me dio mucha ansiedad saber que se tenía que subir a Instagram porque todo el mundo lo iba a ver [...] pero con el paso de las sesiones, como que esa ansiedad se va bajando y una se va sintiendo más cómodo al escribir y dar como más confianza*” [“At first, I felt a lot of anxiety knowing that it had to be uploaded to Instagram because everyone was going to see it [...] but as the sessions went by, that anxiety started to decrease, and I felt more comfortable writing and more confident.”] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 6 mentioned, “*Al principio si se me hizo difícil, pero ya después no como que le tomé el gusto, y se me hizo fácil al final, eso*” [“At first, it was difficult for me, but later, I started to enjoy it, and in the end, it became easy.”] (own translation).

Interestingly, this anxiety was mitigated by the constant use of Instagram. This social network developed this engagement among students, which helped them reduce their anxiety levels. This observation mirrors the findings of Şenel (2018), who suggested that high levels of engagement in writing can serve as a powerful tool to mitigate negative factors such as anxiety, fear of failure, and reluctance to write.

Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

This study suggests that the integration of Instagram as a pedagogical resource can positively impact students’ writing engagement. The results from the pre- and post-intervention tests indicate that engaging in meaningful writing activities on social media platforms like Instagram allows students to improve their writing language skills. In other words, a higher engagement in writing activities enhances academic performance by creating a genuine, meaningful, and authentic learning environment.

This social network provides a platform for students to freely express themselves, enjoy writing, and share their written captions. According to the students’ thoughts in the focus group, Instagram functioned as a space for self-expression and personal satisfaction in writing, contributing to participants’ emotional fulfillment. Consequently, these positive emotional experiences enhanced a strong connection among the students and the writing activities performed on the social network, developing their engagement in writing.

Since Instagram promoted a real, meaningful, and authentic context for learning, participants demonstrated a profound connection with the writing task by investing effort and committing to producing a well-developed written caption that resonated with their experiences and interests, fostering a deep connection with the task. Therefore, Instagram transformed the writing tasks into meaningful experiences, where participants were not simply completing their work but were actively shaping their learning environment, enhancing their overall writing engagement.

The participants used strategies to maintain coherence and clarity in their written tasks. This active involvement made participants experience a sense of enjoyment, showing a high level of commitment to the task, enhancing their writing skills by promoting a positive attitude, and enabling reflective, critical thinking, and improvement. The constant use of Instagram helped students

overcome the fear of judgment from others and develop a sense of community through shared writing experiences.

In terms of implications, nowadays, technology has transformed the traditional approaches to English teaching. In this regard, Instagram is a tremendous pedagogical resource tool for enhancing writing engagement. Therefore, educators could incorporate it into their teaching strategies to create more enjoyable and relevant tasks that may enhance students' level of writing engagement in more contextualized and relevant communicative situations. On this ground, the findings indicate that Instagram aligns well with the expectations of the Chilean educational system. Consequently, teachers could easily integrate Instagram as a pedagogical resource to meet the curriculum objectives effectively.

This action research showed that students could experience cognitive growth and self-regulation using Instagram. As a result, educators should encourage students to continue using the strategies that work best for them to persist in improving their engagement in writing.

Researchers could explore the long-term effects of using Instagram for developing writing engagement, specifically examining how sustained use of the platform influences students' confidence, emotional connection to writing, and continued engagement beyond intervention.

Future research could assess whether these effects persist over time, whether students independently maintain their writing habits, and how their overall writing proficiency evolves. Additionally, comparing the effectiveness of different social networks and investigating strategies to further enhance social writing engagement could help foster a sense of community and reduce anxiety connected to writing tasks, creating a more supportive learning environment for students.

In this study, we considered certain limitations. First, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings that emerged. The analysis would have been much stronger with more participants. Therefore, future research could include a larger group of participants to enhance the external validity of the results. Second, the duration of the study could be considered short. The improvements in writing engagement may be influenced by short-term enthusiasm rather than the effect of Instagram as a pedagogical tool. Consequently, a long-term study could help to understand if these enhancements last over time. Third, this study focused on the use of Instagram as a pedagogical tool. While the results appeared to have a positive impact on the development of the writing engagement, it would be worth considering the effectiveness of Instagram to develop other English language skills. Finally, while there is some research on students' engagement, there is little research on writing engagement, which leaves little room to fully understand and address its nuances.

Recommendations

Exploring different strategies to further enhance the four dimensions of writing engagement and investigating the long-term effects of such strategies could be useful areas of study. On this ground, throughout the intervention and in general terms, students were observed tending to write longer texts as they used Instagram in their writing tasks. In other words, this showed the potential of Instagram to encourage extended writing. In this matter, future research projects should explore the contribution of Instagram not only to the students' engagement in writing, but also to enhancing their

writing fluency. The importance of understanding how students develop writing fluency through the integration of Instagram may provide useful data on how social media could shape communicative competence by fostering writing skills.

Statement of originality

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

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Conflicts of interest

We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

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Author Contributions

Lorena Zapata Arias: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Supervision, Validation, Investigation, Visualization, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Project administration, Writing – review and editing.

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Diana Milena Calderón Vargas: Formal analysis, Supervision, Validation, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Project administration, Writing – review and editing.

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Appendix 1
Pre-intervention Test

Instructions

Look at the following image called “My favourite school memory” and describe YOUR favourite school memory. Use at least 60 words. Make use of verbs in the simple past and vocabulary about school life.

MY FAVOURITE SCHOOL MEMORY

Taken from: www.playmeo.com



Post-intervention test

Writing an Instagram caption

Based on the image you have, get ready to write your Instagram caption. The topic is “*Self-reflection, the power of selfies*”. Make use of vocabulary connected to your topic. Remember that your caption needs to have at least 60 words.

Here you have a template that considers the main elements that an Instagram caption should have

Opening line: Think of a phrase to engage your readers.

The text: Share your thoughts, emotions, tell a story, write a description.

Call-to-action:

A phrase or statement to ask your readers to take a specific action (react, comment, like, go to your bio, etc.).

Hashtags: Create your clickable words or phrases.

Tags and mentions: People you want to share your caption with.

Emojis: Check your text and see if you can replace some words with emojis.

Appendix 2

Likert scale survey

The following statements are about your perceptions of writing engagement. Mark with an “X” the option that most closely represents your opinion regarding the task carried out today.

Las siguientes afirmaciones son sobre tus percepciones del compromiso en la escritura. Marca con una “X” la opción que más represente tu opinión en relación a la actividad realizada hoy.

Statements: <i>Perceptions of writing engagement</i> Afirmaciones: <i>Percepciones del compromiso en la escritura.</i>	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Dimension 1: Affective writing engagement. Dimensión 1: Compromiso emocional en la escritura.				
1. When working on my writing task(s), I am interested in what I am writing. 1. Al realizar mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s), me intereso por lo que estoy escribiendo.				
2. Working on my writing task(s) is interesting. 2. Trabajar en mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s) es interesante.				
3. When working on my writing tasks, I feel good. 3. Al trabajar en mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s), me siento bien.				
Dimension 2: Behavioral writing engagement Dimensión 2: Compromiso conductual en la escritura.				
4. I try hard to do well on my writing tasks. 4. Me esfuerzo por lograr un buen desempeño en mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s).				
5. I work as hard as I can on my writing tasks. 5. Me esfuerzo lo que más pueda en realizar mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s) ¹ .				
Dimension 3: Cognitive writing engagement. Dimensión 3: Compromiso cognitivo en la escritura.				
6. When working on my writing task(s), I reread to see if I can make it better. 6. Al realizar mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s), la(s) vuelvo a leer para ver si puedo mejorarla(s).				
7. When working on my writing task(s), I think carefully about the words I use. 7. Al realizar mi(s) tarea(s) escrita(s), pienso cuidadosamente en las palabras que uso.				
8. I ask myself questions as I am writing to make sure my writing makes sense. 8. Mientras escribo me formulo preguntas para asegurarme de que lo que escribo tenga sentido.				

1 The translation is made for publication purposes.

Dimension 4: Social writing engagement.				
Dimensión 4: Compromiso social en la escritura.				
9. When working on my writing tasks, I talk with other students about my writing.				
9. Al realizar mi(s) tarea(s) de escritura, hablo con otros/as estudiantes acerca de mi(s) escrito(s).				
10. When I am finished with my writing tasks, I want to share them with others.				
10. Cuando termino mi(s) tarea(s) de escritura, quiero compartirlas con los demás.				
11. I can think of at least one person who would want to read my writings.				
11. Puedo pensar en al menos una persona que quisiera leer mi(s) escrito(s).				

Appendix 3

Grupo Focal

1. ¿Cómo te sentiste al desarrollar tus tareas escritas usando la red social Instagram?
2. ¿Querías compartir tu tarea de escritura con otros al terminarla?
3. ¿Qué acciones realizas para demostrar tu *engagement* con las tareas de escritura?
4. ¿Qué técnicas o estrategias utilizas para involucrarte en tus tareas de escritura? y al usar Instagram.
5. ¿Con qué frecuencia comentas tus tareas de escritura con otras personas?
6. ¿Experimentaste algún impacto o algún efecto en tu compromiso con la escritura al utilizar Instagram?
7. ¿Creen ustedes que su compromiso con las tareas de escritura aumenta y/o mejora al usar la red social Instagram para subir sus posts, sus escritos?

Focus Group

1. How did you feel while developing your writing tasks using the social network Instagram?
2. Did you want to share your writing task with others once you finished it?
3. What actions do you take to show your engagement with writing tasks?
4. What techniques or strategies do you use to get engaged in your writing tasks? And while using Instagram.
5. How often do you discuss your writing tasks with others?
6. Did you experience any impact or effect on your engagement in writing while using Instagram?
7. Do you think that your engagement in writing tasks increases and/or improves when using the social network Instagram to upload your posts, your captions?

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- 3) the participants,
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- 5) the implementation (past or ongoing)
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*** English-language teachers from both public and private schools can participate.**

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This declaration's purpose is to clarify the expected duties and ethical behavior of all parties involved in the submission, evaluation, and selection processes of manuscripts sent to the HOW journal.

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