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CONTACT

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Action Research as a Praxis for Transformative Teaching Practice in ELT Classrooms **PLUS** Developing Intercultural Competence: Surveying EFL Learners' Knowledge, Strategies, and Attitudes

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IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue 2

Editor's Note 3

Contact Magazine 4

Articles

Action Research as a Praxis for Transformative Teaching Practice in ELT Classrooms 7

Developing Intercultural Competence: Surveying EFL Learners' Knowledge, Strategies, and Attitudes. 16

Language teachers' knowledge and practice of metacognition. 41

Narratives: Portraying Students' Identity as Writers 49

CLIL as a Meaningful Pathway to Redefine Foreign Language Courses in Higher Education 61

Hild, J. Leaf in the city [Image]. Retrieved from https://www.pexels.com/photo/colorful-leaf-on-wet-city-bench-3020686/

Calendar

December 5-6	TESL Ontario 47th Annual Conference Toronto, Ontario, Canada https://www.teslontario.org/conference
February 1	TESL Toronto Technology for Teachers Minicon Toronto, Ontario, Canada http://tesltoronto.org/
February 7-8	BBELT 2020 Mexico City, Mexico https://www.britishcouncil.org.mx/events/bbelt-2020
February 8	TexTESOL V Regional Conference Arlington, Texas, USA http://textesolv.org/2020v/
March 13-20	HICELLS 2020 Hilo, Hawaii, USA https://hilo.hawaii.edu/depts/english/hicells-2020.php
March 26-28	SCOLT20 Mobile, Alabama, USA https://www.scolt.org/conferences/
March 31-April 3	TESOL Convention 2020 Denver, Colorado, USA https://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn/international-convention

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Fall issue of Contact magazine. This issue features articles from around the globe—literally. From Toronto to Ottawa and Colombia to Turkey, the authors have contributed theories and research that can hopefully apply to all classrooms and teacher practices.

In this issue, Heejin Song discusses action research and how it can act as a constant transformative practice in English language teaching (ELT). Farhad Roodi and Zahra Azin explore language and culture in their full length paper. Shamina Shaheen explains how the need for improved knowledge of metacognition on behalf of the teacher in the classroom can eventually guide learners' metacognitive behaviors in language learning.

The issue also includes Fredy Orlando Salamanca González's research study on student writing and identity using a poststructuralist perspective of identity and theoretical concepts for personal narratives. And Jhonathan Alexander Huertas-Torres accounts for the pedagogical interplay that CLIL could have with a group of undergraduate International Business students; he outlines a five-step procedure to follow when implementing CLIL in university classes.

Our next issue in the Spring commences Volume 46 of Contact. It will take a look at the TESL Ontario Conference which would have been held in December 2019. Some interesting ideas and approaches are brewing for Contact...until the Spring issue, enjoy!

Nicola Carozza
editor@teslontario.org

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ACTION RESEARCH AS A PRAXIS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING PRACTICE IN ELT CLASSROOMS

By Heejin Song, York University, Canada

Abstract

This paper is to illuminate how action research can be used as a praxis to shape teaching as a constant transformative practice in English language teaching (ELT). I will offer a synthesis on what action research is, how professionals have used it in practice, and why action research is a vigorous and enlightening tool for ELT practitioners and teacher educators for their transformative knowledge (re)building process despite some criticisms. Then, I will briefly exemplify two action research projects that I have conducted with different colleagues in different settings.

"The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be, it must become." (Freire, 2000, p. 84)

Action Research & Its Significance in English Language Teaching

Action research refers to research that practitioners conduct on their own practice through reflective inquiries on their own teaching in a systemic spiral and cyclical process with goals of resolving tensions and challenges and improving their practice (Burns, 2005, 2010; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014; Riel, 2010). It has been used in various fields by various social actors. To name a few, classroom teachers in all education levels conduct action research for more effective learning

outcomes and improvement of teaching, practitioners in health care services for learning and improving their service, and social activists in their local and regional communities for civic rights and legal rights movements. The numerous types of action research employed in different disciplines are differentiated from each other based on the involvement of participant(s), for example, individual teacher/practitioner action research, collaborative action research, and participatory action research. Action research is also frequently categorized based on its research context, for instance, classroom action research, school-wide action research, and district-wide action research, and also distinguished based on its purposes such as technical action research that is outcome-oriented, practical action research to provide better service and guidance for practitioners, and critical action research that aims for social change and emancipation (See Burns, 2005, p. 58, and Kemmis, McTarrart & Nixon, 2014, pp. 8-17 for the comparison of different types of action research). What the differing types of action research share is the process of its systemic planning, action and reflection in a spiral and cyclical progression and its goal, that is, change, transformation and improvement of practice, whether it is for short-term or long-term or infinite.

Despite its wide-spread use in various disciplines, and well-intended orientation, action research has not been without criticisms. In fact, as Burns (2005) notes, a quite adverse and aggressive sentiment regarding action research reflected in a few well-known ELT publications in the early 2000s ignited contested discussions regarding the conceptualization of educational research in ELT. One of the strong criticisms derives from a view of positivist research paradigm wherein 'scientific' research is understood primarily through statistical and quantitative data that is considered as 'empirical' evidence to 'legitimately' inform and advance the practice as discussed in Borg (2002) and similarly in Burns (2005). In other words, from this positivist and essentialist perspective of viewing knowledge construction and reconstruction, only generalizable research data are deemed as legitimate and eligible to contribute to the reproduction of knowledge and the betterment of practice. Action research from this perspective is then considered as non-scientific work because it is based on individual practitioners' reflective narratives of their personalized practice, whether individual or collective, and is produced by non-experts and thus it is illegitimate to advance knowledge and scholarship.

However, this essentialist understanding of knowledge and epistemology (i.e. how to reproduce the knowledge) is rebutted by numerous educational researchers and language teacher educators whose views reflect more toward social constructivist and/or postmodernist (e.g. Bailey, 1998; Borg, 2002; Burns, 2005; Holwell, 2004; Lotherington, 2002). They refute that action research is a form of empirical research by using various data that are systematically collected and analysed in a planned protocol. The generalizability of the research findings as seen in 'mainstream' research is not part of the agenda for action research. Rather, the results of action research are self-reflective and interpretative to inform very localized practice with action that can lead to better practice and improved learning. Furthermore, action research rejects the hierarchical distinction between researcher/expert and participant/non-expert, advocating for more collaborative and equitable relations of power that operate in the dynamics of conducting research. Teacher educators and teacher practitioners, and teachers and their learners can be co-conductors of research and co-constructors of knowledge building. In essence, action research is rooted in Freire's (1970, 2000) critical pedagogy, seeing the dialectic relationship between teaching and learning and between theory and practice in that each entity exists and progresses through reciprocal support for each other.

Snapshots of Action Research in ELT

I have used forms of collaborative action research and critical action research as a practitioner-researcher with different colleagues in different ELT settings. The critical action research that I have conducted follows the characteristics of critical participatory action research (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014) in that it examines tensions in professional practice and aims to transform the practice for more meaningful learning and teaching and moving toward social justice. The following examples are snapshots of action research projects that I have conducted in different ELT settings.

Project 1: Action research in the ESL and English literacy classroom in a TDSB secondary school

I conducted collaborative action research with a TDSB secondary school English as Second Language (ESL)/English literacies teacher for identifying issues of learners' academic disengagement and underachievement using a culturally relevant pedagogy with the goal of increasing students' classroom engagement and investment for their academic achievement. The issues that affected the students' academic performance were complex and convoluted as many of the students in the school were newcomer adolescents to Canada, most of whom reflect socioeconomically underprivileged and socio-politically vulnerable status. Their sociopolitical conditions (e.g., relocating residency due to vulnerable financial reasons, sudden deportation due to the immigration policy changes) were closely affecting their involvement in academic activities and academic success. To address this tension, the initial action research cycle (i.e. phase) was planned to support learners' active engagement in the lesson and class activities to engage the numerous students who were silent in class. Using a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2013), the students were intentionally grouped with those who had the same cultural and/or linguistic background to mediate their understanding of the lesson and readings which were on the topic of marriage. Students in pairs and in groups read the given texts and discussed their understanding of the texts using their home language and English first and shared their cultural reflections as well as personal opinions related to marriage in English to the class. Most students showed greater interactions with their peers and teachers through their excitement of sharing cultural differences in dating someone and getting married. Even those who had previously remained quiet in class, eagerly participated in class discussions on the cultural differences in marriage. For example, when unpacking the concept of India's caste system in one of the readings, students who were familiar with it shared their prior cultural knowledge about it with their peers, which led to the further discussion of unequal social systems that exist in different cultures.

To strengthen this dynamic of class engagement and further scaffold students' learning in English, the action research cycle was recreated adding another

pedagogical tool, transformative multiliteracies pedagogy (Cummins & Early, 2011). The class was set as a research workshop with a lesson topic on 'famous Canadians' which involved a research project wherein students had to present their research on famous Canadians a week later. It was scaffolded through cultural comparisons between famous Canadians and those famous in different countries. In this second action research cycle, the teachers (i.e. main ESL teacher and teacher-researcher, myself) and students had more flexible classroom interactions, and at times, one-to-one discussions based on their inquires related to their research topic. At times, to their surprise, students reported their excitement learning that some famous Canadians are originally from their home country. This, in turn, increased their investment in their individual research project, leading to them spending more time searching for more information in class and outside class time.

In the presentations of their research projects, students were encouraged to use various tools to deliver their findings. Their presentations were multimodal reflecting various forms of multiliteracies through images, written and verbal expressions, and songs and videos along with their reflection of their lives relating to the famous Canadian's life stories. Throughout the two cycles of action research with the same group of students in this ESL and English literacy class, I was able to witness that students' engagement in class activities and investment in their search for knowledge increasingly improved. Despite the multitude and multiplicity of concerns and issues surrounding these learners, the application of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014) and transformative multiliteracies pedagogy (Cummins & Early, 2011) allowed the learners to express their cultural and linguistic identities and increase their investment in learning.

Project 2: Collaborative action research on Academic vocabulary teaching in an EAP course

Cummins and Early (2015) assert, based on their analysis of the academic language proficiency of newcomer English learners in the Toronto Board of Education, that academic vocabulary is more challenging for English language learners compared to domestic students whose first language is English. Having

this empirical research evidence in addition to the program-wide emphasis on academic vocabulary teaching in the year of 2015-2016 in an EAP program in a Canadian university located in the centre of a culturally and linguistically heterogenous city, I collaborated with my colleagues who taught the same course that focused on interdisciplinary academic literacy skills (e.g. critical thinking and problem-solving skills, academic reading and writing, research skills, and digital literacies) to pilot an academic vocabulary acquisition project for international students who were conditionally admitted to the university. The initial goal of the vocabulary teaching project was to help students develop autonomous learning and self-motivation, which was the purpose of the first cycle in this action research. Students were assigned to compile a weekly vocabulary diary where they wrote definitions and sample sentences of academic words. Although all students participated in this individual vocabulary journal/diary, which was worth 2% of their total grade, many entries did not meet the instructors' expected goals, and some showed serious ethical issues such as plagiarism, for instance, copying example sentences from online dictionaries.

In response to those issues, a new approach to academic vocabulary teaching in the following semester (i.e. the second cycle of this action research) was introduced with the ideas of performance-based, multimodality-enhanced, and learner-directed vocabulary teaching. This approach to vocabulary teaching was greatly influenced by Cummins' (2009) transformative multiliteracies pedagogy to facilitate students' development of their multiliteracies skills where they increase their capability to express ideas multimodally in multiliterate forms.

In their vocabulary presentation/performance groups, students were encouraged to use multimodal forms including various traditional and alternative tools to present their work, that is, teaching academic words to the class in a constructive and creative way. Also, their presentation/performance was to incorporate various forms of literacies (e.g. conventional oral and written literacies and digital and filmographic or performance-based) with a goal to foster critical literacy skills with critical awareness of how language is learned and how language intersects with cultural elements. For their presentations, most groups used Powerpoint slides or Prezi that included various modes of expression such as images, graphs,

charts, and videos. Some groups also performed skits, created digital games and quizzes, and made the class move around as part of the activity for reviewing and testing the academic vocabulary.

The preponderance of students' reflections regarding the most useful way of learning academic vocabulary showed that multimodal activities (e.g. combinations of games, quiz, skits, musical chairs) added to the vocabulary presentations as they were stimulating for students to use and helped them remember new words. Students created a unique learning environment and opportunity where they were able to think of the cultural and academic context in which the words could be used, and they were able to say the words and explain the words adequately in an appropriate context. Students' investment and their accountability in learning increased as they were participating in activities as active agents in their learning as well as developing creativity while working on the collaborative vocabulary acquisition project.

Their reflective thinking on their own learning processes was continuously exercised throughout the semester when discussing issues related to the vocabulary presentation preparation with instructors in class and during office hours. Students not only improved their academic skills, such as clear oral delivery and organizing ideas concisely but also had opportunities to develop interpersonal and pragmatic skills such as collaborating ideas and coordinating/negotiating roles in tasks and respecting individuals' rights to learn and maintaining the group harmony by mutually contributing to the group presentation. This also created opportunities for instructors to learn from learners' creative methods of learning, which in fact informed my teaching in the following year where I adopted more digital education apps such as Kahoot and Quizlet. This highlights that learning and teaching is indeed a dialogic and dialectic process.

Concluding Remarks

I have articulated the importance of action research in teaching practice and showcased how action research is executed in two ELT settings. The process of action research collaboratively evolves through reflective inquiry and appropriate theory through its spiral and cyclical cycles. Action research begins

by identifying areas of tension or concern, proceeds with appropriate action, observation, and collection, and analysis of tangible and non-tangible data (e.g. students' journal entries, presentations, class observation, dialogues between students and instructors during office hours, formal and informal reflection surveys from students, teachers' reflection), and continues this cycle through revised action, observation, reflection, and analysis. It is important to note that critical action research goes beyond the fixing of 'problem' in practice. In critical action research in ELT, teacher practitioners and/or educators mediate practice through empirically-proven pedagogical tools that render possible the creation of equitable educational opportunities for students' learning and knowledge construction. As such, I believe, critical action research as seen in the examples mentioned above, allows teacher-researchers to (re)structure their teaching toward more transformative practice by creating more space for learners to express their prior knowledge and to become the main social agents in their learning. It is also crucial that critically oriented action research should include appropriate critical pedagogical lenses that inform teaching practices to be appropriated in the localized teaching context.

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DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: SURVEYING EFL LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE, STRATEGIES, AND ATTITUDES

By Farhad Roodi, University of Ottawa, Canada & Zahra Azin, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey

Abstract

Understanding others has long been a goal of language teaching yet remaining in the background of educational practices (Liddicoat, 2012). One of the existing challenges in the language-teaching domain is the integration of culture and language. The incentive to conduct this study is the existing gap of teaching culture in language classrooms. The researchers investigated learners' opinions on the presentation of English-speaking countries' (ESC) cultures and explored the cultural knowledge scope of Iranian EFL learners. Besides, the strategies used by the learners to acquire intercultural communicative competence were explored. A questionnaire was distributed among 250 language learners, yet twenty-six male and female EFL learners, intermediate and upper-intermediate level, were interviewed to probe their knowledge, strategies, and attitudes. The results showed the total inclination of the EFL learners toward cultural understanding. However, their knowledge scope was not proportionate with their language proficiency. Analyzing the strategies, the researchers found some were common to the EFL learners. The participants of this study corroborated the importance of culture teaching and considered culture as influential as the English language itself. It can be concluded that culture teaching is a requirement for language classrooms, which facilitates language learning, makes learners tolerant of the target culture, and results in the realization of the learners' own culture. Much more effort is required in order to apply and perform culture teaching in real language classrooms.

Introduction

The growth and expansion of relations with foreign countries and advancement in science and technology, which requires constant contact with the world, have led to the incremental growth of the English language used as a lingua franca in the world. For the time being, knowledge of the English language is a window to communicate with foreign countries (Feng, 2009). On the importance of culture to language learners, Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) claim that intercultural awareness assists learners to bridge the gaps in their understanding of foreign culture and to develop a close relationship with foreign people. Defining culture, Kramsch (2001) regards it as "membership in a discourse community" (p. 10). Therefore, establishing communication with foreign countries requires both lingual and cultural knowledge. However, the relationship between culture and language is not crystal clear, but there is no doubt on the close yet complicated relationship between them (Byram, 2006).

Literature Review

The history of language teaching, in general, and foreign language teaching, in particular, has witnessed plentiful instances of connection between language instruction and culture teaching (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). However, the link between culture and language is contingent on how culture has been perceived. By the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), culture has gained a proper stance in ELT practitioners' views. Applied linguists discussed the possibilities and consequences of including cultural components into language education curriculum (Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002). These endeavors brought the thoughtfulness about an intertwined relationship between culture and language (Pulverness, 2000). The result of this attention was that culture has been recognized as an indispensable component of language teaching. This point is sufficient on the importance of culture that human nature independent of culture is nothing (McDevitt, 2004). The way people speak and behave is directly inspired by their culture, religion, and folklore. Whether to incorporate culture into language teaching materials and see its fruit as intercultural understanding is still a vital question in the domain of ELT (Garrett-Rucks, 2016).

Intercultural Communicative Competence

The idea of 'intercultural communicative competence' revived the integration of language teaching and culture. Having used the 'intercultural' term, Kramsch (1993) claims that language learners need to be familiarized with both their own and foreign cultures. With the advent of communicative language teaching, culture gained a proper stand in the realm of ELT and, hence, practicing culture and considering its components, i.e., intercultural competence, were highlighted (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). They used intercultural competence to name the knowledge of understanding a different culture as a result of learning a foreign language.

Intercultural knowledge and competence are "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 105). Therefore, it can be stated that intercultural competence is the capability of working successfully within and across various cultures. Intercultural competence has been named differently in the literature, for example, global competence, intercultural effectiveness, cross-cultural competence, international competence, or intercultural effectiveness.

Through awareness of a foreign culture, learners can cater for a close relationship with a foreign interlocutor; furthermore, the learners become more cognizant of their own culture as they have been introduced to the differences of the two cultures (Byram, 2006). Hence, developing an intercultural competence will benefit learners in both appreciating their own culture and establishing mutual understanding. Intercultural competence is a mean by which people are capable of flourishing shared understanding with the members of foreign cultures and countries (Byram et al., 2002). Intercultural competence necessitates an interlocutor to take part in a productive interaction and communication with people of cultures different from his (Clark, 2008). As culture includes the norms and values of each society, the notion of intercultural understanding entails the awareness of such norms that should be observed in intercultural communication (Ojeda & Cecilia, 2005).

The extension of Hymes' communicative competence can lead to intercultural communicative competence that consists of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies (Sercu, 2004). Further, Sercu (ibid) claims that intercultural competence has gone through changes as the purposes of culture teaching had been altered. These back-and-forth moves are tangible in the terminologies of intercultural competence from, traditionally, "familiarity with foreign culture" to "cultural awareness" and, recently, "intercultural competence" (ibid). Byram et al. (2002) define intercultural communicative competence as the "ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (p. 10). This competence and ability enable one to look at their behavior according to the values and beliefs of the target culture. This ability gives an 'external' point of view to the person who has already gained an extent of affective, behavioral, and cognitive capacities through intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2006).

Research on Teaching Culture

As culture became a salient concept in language teaching, teachers, educationists, and linguists did not overlook its importance in learning a foreign language. All scholars around the world have done studies to investigate different facets of culture and its incorporation into the language learning domain. Since the first explicit realization of culture in the 1970s in communicative language learning, language practitioners have tried hard to define culture and its components clearly. Many theories and frameworks have been suggested to shed light on what culture is and how it should be interjected into language learning classrooms. Studies on cultural issues can be threefold, i.e., investigating culture from the viewpoint of learners, teachers, or exploring textbooks' contents. In each and every one of these three areas, scholars have done noteworthy studies, but among them, the former one still requires more detailed investigation. The richest area of studies is related to textbook analysis. Different textbooks were analyzed of their contents to see whether they are presenting an adequate quantity of cultural information.

Rousseau (2011) inspected teachers' awareness of cultural values and diversities in English classrooms in Qatar. The research dealt with how native English-speaking lecturers at one specific language center in Qatar acknowledge these cultural diversities and values and how they accommodate adult learners in the multicultural classroom environment by conducting literature reviews and an empirical investigation. Qualitative data was collected by distributing open-ended questionnaires among lecturers and learners, holding focus group interviews with lecturers and learners, having individual interviews with lecturers, observing classrooms, and keeping field notes. Findings revealed that lecturers were aware of the cultural diversities and values of learners who came into the classroom from different nationalities and accommodated these learners without bias (Rousseau, 2011). These differences, however, did not necessarily influence their teaching styles, and lecturers remained focused on teaching English as effectively as possible.

In a study, Alpay (2009) examined the effect of using cultural content for the development of language skills, i.e., she tried to show the interaction and bond between language and culture. The researcher designed a new syllabus based on different types of reading texts, each consisting of different cultural motives for a 10-week English class. Although the result did not show any significant effect of cultural content on developing language skills, the class observation showed great enthusiasm for learning English that would affect learners' motivation.

Genc and Bada (2005) probed Turkish learners' views on the cultural classes they had attended. Inspecting the stance of culture in language learning and teaching, Genc and Bada (2005) showed the analogy between learners' affinity to culture teaching and the advantage of teaching culture as had been proven in the literature of cultural studies. They claimed that learners' cultural awareness had been raised to a considerable level by attending the culture classes. The necessity and cruciality of presenting cultural information, or conducting separate cultural classes, have been justified by the views of the participants in the study (Genc & Bada, 2005).

In another study, Saluveer (2004) focused on an overview of culture teaching in the literature of foreign language teaching to present the essential ideas and

suggestions for teaching culture. He examined learners and teachers' views by the aid of two questionnaires and presented some teaching techniques and other materials related to the teaching of culture for conducting his study. He concluded that setting goals for teachers and presenting the culture-related topics and activities are the easiest way of designing a cultural syllabus for a foreign language classroom. Furthermore, he verified that teachers mostly focus on the acquisition of language than culture in Turkey, and learners are not competent in terms of British culture.

Most of the studies in the domain of intercultural competence and culture focused on the attitude of both learners and teachers; however, investigating the strategies of acquiring intercultural competence was not addressed appropriately in the literature. The most extensive area of research is textbook analysis regarding their presentation of intercultural information.

Purpose of the Study

Integration of culture into foreign language education is not a new controversy, and this need has long been emphasized in numerous studies (Byram, 1989, 1997, & 2002; Kramsch, 1998 & 2001). Nevertheless, many language education practitioners seem to ignore the implication of these studies and the importance of the fact that knowledge of target language culture would assist learners in attaining intercultural competence. Regarding the growth of attention to intercultural language learning and the fusion of culture and language teaching, this study aimed to investigate the cultural knowledge of English language learners to determine whether English learners, both male and female, possess adequate knowledge of English culture through years of studying English. Second, the researchers were motivated to probe into the strategies learners employ to acquire intercultural competence and advance their understanding of English culture. Third, through exploring learners' attitudes, the researchers tried to seek answers to learners' willingness to the integration of English culture and language teaching, i.e., whether culture teaching is more important than the language itself or vice versa. Whether knowledge of the target language increases learners' awareness of their own culture was another theme to be disclosed. Furthermore, the stance of teachers, positive or negative, toward English culture

was asked from the learners. Pennington (2002) asserts that learners and their teachers form an in-group connection that shapes their identity. This bond between teachers and learners will affect learners' attitudes toward culture, that is, if the teacher speaks positively of English culture, learners will think the same and vice versa. Therefore, surveying learners on their cultural knowledge, type of strategies they use, and their attitudes was the purpose of this study.

Methodology

Participants

The researchers involved 26 intermediate and upper-intermediate language learners studying at two different English language institutes. The language institutes were the Iran Language Institute (ILI) and Homapoor Language Home (HLH), located in Tehran, the capital of Iran. The participants were interviewed to gain an in-depth understanding of their attitudes toward and knowledge of the intercultural content of ELT textbooks and the strategies they used to gain their knowledge. The motivation for involving these learners was that learners in language institutes are likely to have higher motivation for learning language, and this was the reason that triggered them to enroll in language institutes. In addition, learners of higher levels are more sensitive to cultural issues than beginners are. They have learned language rules and have become proficient to some extent; hence, their ideas about teaching culture can be of great use. Therefore, the participants were chosen from intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. To make sure of the proficiency level of the participants, they were asked to specify the total years of learning English in the beginning part of the questionnaire. However, the placement tests of the institutes themselves were a confirmation to learners' language proficiency.

The Interview

The researchers tried to go in detail to seek learners' opinions in-depth and explore their attitudes toward culture and culture teaching. Whether learners deemed culture teaching essential or what the stance of culture should be in language classrooms were investigated further in this phase. Learners were

asked about the strategies they employed to gain intercultural understanding. The interviews were intended to reveal the connection between learning a foreign culture and learners' awareness of their own culture. The interview section aimed to collect as much information as possible regarding the nature of any potential contribution of culture learning to the teaching profession.

The questions of the interview were extracted from the intercultural identity questionnaire adopted from Sercu (2004). The questions entailed inquiries about learners' knowledge, strategy use, and attitudes toward English-speaking countries' cultures. Additionally, the questions asked about the roles of a teacher or textbook in the classroom and the effect of English-speaking countries' cultures on learners' own culture. The stance of the English language culture in the classrooms and its importance compared to textbooks were asked from the participants. The Iranian EFL learners were asked about how the culture was reflected in their classrooms.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The participants were interviewed separately, answering several questions regarding their knowledge, strategy use, and attitudes toward English-speaking countries' cultures. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for content analysis to discover the themes related to learners' attitudes toward the cultural content of ELT textbooks. The analysis of the data revealed in-depth information about learners' knowledge of cultural points, the strategies they have used, and their attitudes toward intercultural understanding. Since culture is a concept which is not introduced to beginner learners, the proficiency level of learners was chosen to be intermediate and upper-intermediate for the sake of eliminating the lack of language proficiency.

Results and Discussion

In the theoretical part of this study, the prospects and reasons for integrating culture and language were presented. In this section, the results of content analysis are described to reveal the scope of knowledge that learners have

acquired, the type of strategies that they have used, and the attitudes that they have adopted regarding the culture of English-speaking countries.

The knowledge

First of all, the learners answered the question of 'How much are you familiar with the culture of English-speaking countries?'. The learners were asked to indicate their knowledge scope on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, from 'not familiar at all' to 'very familiar', and the average of their knowledge scope was 3. Most of the learners declared that they know about the culture of English people, such as their food, drink, lifestyle, daily-life routines, music, traditions, education, and public relations. The participants, mostly, numbered themselves 3 out of 5 regarding the knowledge of English culture and 4.5 out of 5 regarding the knowledge of their own culture. The components of cultural knowledge are presented in Table 4.1 from which the participants revealed their knowledge and the components are the definition of cultural knowledge. The ten items of cultural knowledge were presented to the participants, and they chose the items which they were familiar with. However, an average of 3 was the score for learners' familiarity with the whole ten items. Among the ten components, literature and different ethnic or social groups were mentioned less frequently. The participants were mostly familiar with their daily-life routines and youth culture.

Table 4.1: The cultural knowledge components

1. History, geography, political system
2. Different ethnic and social groups
3. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.
4. Youth culture
5. Education, professional life
6. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions
7. Literature
8. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)
9. Values and beliefs
10. International relations (political, economic and cultural), with students' own country and other countries

Some of the responses to the first question of the interview are presented below, which reveal the knowledge of Iranian EFL learners in detail. The participants

answered the first and second questions at the same time. The second question, 'Which cultural knowledge do you consider more important?' dealt with the components of cultural knowledge and the importance of knowing each item.

Extract 1: I give myself 3 out of 5. I know their traditions, marriage conventions, and their in-family relationships.

Extract 2: I'm familiar most with their daily life according to the movies I have seen, also part of their history according to what I have read in history books, and their international relations. I think 3.

Extract 3: I know their beliefs and values, but I think their life routines and social groups are more important in this category.

Extract 4: Since I want to go there, their daily life routines and their customs and traditions are more important to me.

Extract 5: If a person doesn't want to live in their society knowing their literature is sufficient, but if that person wants to live in an English country, she/he should learn their culture totally.

Extract 6: It depends on the learner. For example, for myself, according to my job and scientific position, international relations are more important; however, I think knowing their everyday life, traditions, and folklore are significant.

Extract 7: It depends on the thinking style of each person, but I think art and music are more important.

Strategies

The second part of the questions was focused on the strategy use of Iranian EFL learners. The participants were asked about the strategies they used or considered useful regarding culture learning. Like the first part of the questions, the strategies have been introduced to the learners; however, they could present and introduce their own strategy of learning as well. Among media, movies, the internet, self-studying, books, teachers, traveling, friends' experiences, etc., the participants chose media, movies, the internet, friends' experiences, and books more frequently than the other strategies respectively. They believed that media and movies are credible and affordable means for any learners. The strategies were presented in order of importance according to learners' responses in Table 4.2. Some of the responses to the question of 'Which strategies do you think help the learners to attain the knowledge of English-speaking countries' culture?' were inserted to illuminate the reasons for choosing the mentioned strategies.

Table 4.2: Strategies' Rank Order

Rank	The Strategies	Frequency
1	Media	26
2	Movies	24
3	The Internet	21
4	Friends' Experiences	17
5	English Language Textbooks	15
6	Self-studying	13
7	Traveling to those Countries	11
8	English Language Classes	9
8	Language Teachers	9

Extract 8: ...Through reading books and media and through some of my friends who have been there before, but I think being in those countries is more helpful for a person.

Extract 9: Movies, media, and (the) internet can help learners most to understand their culture.

Extract 10: I learned both through movies I have seen and the books I have read, but media, I think, have the outmost importance.

Extract 11: The movies show their daily life and jobs and how they treat and behave each other helped me a lot to learn their culture.

Extract 12: More through the help of my friends who traveled to those countries and the classes I have attended..., but I think media and the Internet can be of great importance and help learners.

Extract 13: An individual's interest and care are very important, after that, a direct contact with native people is very important.

The participants were asked to evaluate the books they read and their teachers in the language classrooms. Some of the learners were on behalf of their teachers and some were not. The same story was true of English language textbooks; some agreed that their textbooks reflect English culture, mostly their daily-life routines, and some did not.

Extract 14: Traveling to those countries is very good...but books can't help a lot...

Extract 15: Our teachers are not knowledgeable about their culture because they were not there, but the books are quite satisfactory regarding the cultural reflection.

Extract 16: My teacher is good, sometimes compare our own culture with theirs, and also raise a topic to be discussed in the classroom. Since we study international textbooks, culture of different countries is presented together.

Extract 17: More or less they convey cultural information, but books published in Iran usually choose the middle path…

Extract 18: Not completely, but books are not devoid of cultural information.

Extract 19: Teachers should pay attention to culture but, unfortunately, they don't.

Attitudes

Regarding EFL learners' attitudes toward English-speaking countries' cultures, the researchers asked them to pinpoint the importance of teaching culture in the language classrooms and the impact of learning English culture on learners' own culture. Therefore, the participants answered two questions regarding their attitudes toward teaching culture in language classrooms. The interviewees mentioned that their culture is as important as the English language itself. Lack of cultural knowledge may result in miscommunication and misunderstanding. Some of the responses to the first question are:

Extract 20: I think cultural points should be taught like English language in the classroom.

Extract 21: Knowing their culture will ease communication, thus culture is as important as language.

Extract 22: Culture is very important. For example, knowing their culture will give learners self-confidence, which is true for me. Culture should be taught alongside the English language in the classroom.

The second question tried to reveal the consequences of learning a foreign culture. Due to religious differences, some of the English culture routines are forbidden in Iranian culture and committing those actions would be considered a sin. Whether these differences change learners' attitudes toward English culture was the aim of this question. The learners were asked about the impact of learning English culture and if there is any impact, either positive or negative? In addition, they were asked about the attitudes of teachers and learners, whether they should be positive, negative, or neutral. Some of the responses are presented in the following.

Extract 23: It depends on the person; however, there is an impact. Teachers should be neutral to their culture, but a learner should have a positive view of their culture to help him/her to learn better…

Extract 24: I think positive or negative view is meaningless. They have positive and negative aspects in their life as we do, we should focus on their deep aspects of life and to see the filled part of the glass…

Extract 25: Of course, it affects our culture, but the positive or negative impact depends on the learner. Some may decline their own culture, but I am sure most don't.

Extract 26: Teachers usually don't care about their culture since they have not been there and their view is neutral, but learners should like their culture to learn better for either they want to travel to their country or live there.

Extract 27: Knowing their culture is important; the negative or positive view is not a matter…

Extract 28: It has an impact, but it depends. For example, I changed a lot and I don't use 'Tarof' expressions anymore. Some may view this positive and some may not.

Discussion

The participants of this study showed an average level of knowledge about English-speaking countries' cultures. Most of the participants scored themselves 3 out of 5. However, when they were asked about the ten cultural components, most of them did not have any knowledge about their literature and different ethnic/social groups. They were familiar with primary cultural knowledge, such as daily-life routines, food, drinks, music, and education. Since most international textbooks reflect daily life routines, the learners were mostly familiar with it. Sercu, Méndez, and Castro (2004) consider language education as an intercultural subject, and the participants substantiate that language learning is not the acquisition of lexical items and linguistic symbols. Students should become interculturally competent through the learning of a new language (Sercu et al., 2004).

The inadequate knowledge of literature is not unexpected since neither English classrooms nor English textbooks focus on teaching literature. The four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the ultimate goal of English classrooms, which result in establishing the communicative competence of learners; however, the focus on each skill may be varied in each English classroom. Regarding the importance of each cultural component, some learners assigned it to the goal and need of a learner. Some prioritized international relationships

for the sake of their job and some focused on music or art due to their likings. However, there was a consensus on the importance of daily life routines.

Considering the EFL learners' language proficiency, their intercultural competence was not as proportionate to their language competence. Since the participants of this study were intermediate and upper-intermediate learners, a higher culture familiarity was expected due to the number of years of studying English and the lucid importance of culture in the language teaching domain. Hence, the knowledge scope of Iranian learners is not commensurate with their language competence. As they considered some elements more prominent, they had quite satisfactory knowledge of youth culture, daily-life routines, living conditions, food and drinks, and international relationships with other countries. More attention to English literature and their social and ethnic groups is needed for Iranian EFL learners.

The EFL learners assigned this low level of cultural knowledge to the fact that their textbooks, teachers, and language classrooms did not reflect cultural teaching. The sheer focus on language skills forced textbook publishers and teachers to cause the present gap between language and intercultural competence in the EFL domain. Although textbooks and teachers are among the primary sources of acquiring language and culture competence, they were not beneficial to Iranian EFL learners. Textbooks' inadequacy in presenting culture is tangible in the learners' opinions. Most of the learners stated that textbooks, and even teachers, were not convenient regarding cultural information (Extract 15, 17, & 18). However, some of the learners were on behalf of their teacher and textbooks. It can be concluded that textbooks are not utterly useless regarding culture teaching; however, there is a need for improvement.

Among the strategies, media, movies, and the internet were ranked as the first three useful and beneficial strategies for acquiring cultural knowledge. The reason for this significance may be the availability of these media. Each learner can easily watch TV or movies and search the internet to find a meaning or definition. One's friends' experiences ranked 4 because not all the learners had friends who had traveled to those English-speaking countries. Regarding textbooks, the views were not consistent, some favored textbooks, and others did not. However,

some of the participants made a distinction between international textbooks and Iranian-published textbooks. They stated that textbooks published in Iran are not representing English culture (Extract 17). On the contrary, international textbooks met the needs of Iranian EFL learners. Although the learners admitted that direct contact with native speakers is the most effective and easiest way of boosting cultural knowledge, traveling was ranked 6 due to its affordability. Among 26 participants, just a few of them have traveled to foreign countries. The low ranking of this effective method of acquiring cultural knowledge can be assigned to its affordability to EFL learners in Iran. Language teachers and classrooms were the least effective medium of presenting cultural knowledge. Although culture has long been emphasized in the literature (Byram, 2006 & Kramsch, 2001), proper attention has not been paid to culture teaching.

According to the results of this study, more attention should be given to culture teaching in language classrooms. Among the defining elements of culture, the knowledge of literature and social/ethnic groups needs more consideration. The EFL learners were not content with the load of cultural information presented by their textbooks or teachers. According to Phipps and Gonzalez (2004), studying another language and culture results in the act of realizing and recognizing one's own culture. Therefore, by studying English-speaking countries' cultures, the learners become more cognizant of their own culture and tolerant of the differences between the two cultures. Having asked the interview questions, the researchers investigated different strategies and the usefulness of them. Among the presented strategies, textbooks and teachers were not considered beneficial. However, according to Ojeda and Cecilia (2005) and Byram (2006), teachers and textbooks should be the primary sources of presenting different information about the language and culture associated with it. The participants reasoned that their teachers were not interculturally competent themselves; hence, they could not contribute much in language classrooms. Thus, based on the results of this study, it can be discussed that more attention to cultural knowledge, primarily political, social, and historical knowledge, should be injected into language textbooks in general and locally published textbooks in particular.

Asking questions about attitudes showed the stance of culture in the viewpoint of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of this study emphasized the role of teaching culture and mentioned the existing gap of presenting cultural information in language classrooms. They believed that culture and language are equally important and stated that good language learning needs a balanced scale. Incompetent teachers and culturally low-quality textbooks, regarding cultural information, made the learners declare that cultural knowledge cannot be attained in language institutes, which in turn justifies the low ranking of language teachers and classrooms as strategies of developing intercultural competence.

The Iranian EFL learners corroborated the importance of culture, and they are thoroughly willing to learn English-speaking countries' cultures; however, the path of teaching culture is not paved in the TEFL/TESOL field. The result of the attitude questions was a confirmation of the necessity of language and culture amalgamation. As Mackey (2003) asserts, learning culture facilitates language learning. Thus, presenting different cultural information will make the language learning process more exciting and facilitates the hardships of learning a new language. The benefits and significance of developing interculturally competent learners are not hidden to anybody; however, the important consideration of teaching culture is the necessity of amalgamating language and culture in an interculturally oriented language education (Bayram, 1991).

Regarding the impact of English culture on learners' own culture, the participants accentuated the trace of English culture on their own behavior (Extract 28). Almost all the participants admitted the impact of learning a foreign culture on their own culture; however, the positiveness or negativeness of its effect depends on the learner. The participants declared that some might view foreign culture negatively and do not approach it at all, but others may look for compatible parts to their culture. All the learners assigned their view conditional to personality type. They did not give a direct answer of yes or no. Comparing the two cultures in the classroom may help learners to find the similarities and accept the differences for intercultural understanding, which will make learners tolerant of the foreign culture.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion

Studying another language can be implied as a way of studying and understanding another culture and its people. The existing challenge in the language-teaching domain is the integration of culture and language, i.e., how to develop the need for intercultural competence to practice in language classrooms. Different scholars and teachers have deemed culture teaching and intercultural communicative competence a necessity in language classrooms (see Garrett-Rucks, 2016), and this study is a confirmation to that.

The participants of this study corroborated that teaching culture and boosting intercultural competence accompany language learning, confirming what Byram (1990) and Byram and Flemming (1998) emphasized. According to the result of this study, the first view of culture teaching was verified by the Iranian EFL learners who maintained that the target culture should be presented and taught in language classrooms. After analyzing the knowledge scope of Iranian EFL learners, it became clear that their knowledge of cultural elements was not commensurate with their language competency, i.e. compared with their language proficiency, the participants of this study lacked intercultural communicative competence. The widest gap in the Iranian EFL learners' knowledge is the capital C side of culture definition. They do not have proper knowledge about literature, music, art, geography, and ethnic groups of English-speaking countries. However, the small c, which is daily life routines, food, drinks, beliefs, education, etc., is properly introduced to them. Thus, more attention to high-status cultural elements is required to be envisaged in language learning classrooms and textbooks since the learners have regarded capital C as important as small c. Culture with capital 'C' is defined as the study of literature, art, history, music, etc., but small 'c' culture refers to human interactions and viewpoints and daily life rituals (Alatis, Straehle, Gallenberger, & Ronkin 1996, p. 148).

Textbooks were considered as an incentive to learn language and culture but not a representative material of English-speaking countries' culture by the participants of this study. Although the importance of intercultural competence

is clear to scholars, teachers, and language learners, the knowledge of cultural points is not practiced in the language classrooms, and EFL learners lack intercultural communicative competence. Presenting the cultural features of English-speaking countries and how it would be like to live in these countries was an essential strategy in the views of EFL language learners. Almost all the strategies were considered useful and were practiced in the route of learning English. A comparison of the two cultures, Iranian and English, was regarded as a useful strategy to establish the differences and similarities in the minds of learners. The EFL learners explained that sometimes they compare one cultural element in the two cultures to find similarities and differences. However, they are not always successful in finding contrasting or corresponding points. Teachers or language textbooks should mediate to ease learning and make the classroom environment appealing. For instance, introducing the expression 'knock on the wood' used for preventing evil intentions will show the similarity between the two cultures and, consequently, will motivate the learner toward the learning of the English language. In the same vein, when learners acknowledge the differences between the two cultures, they will be more tolerant of the target culture (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004). Asking for the EFL learners' opinions on the strategies of acquiring intercultural communicative competence will help teachers structure their tasks and exercises toward an optimized level. Overall, the strategies introduced to EFL learners in this study proved useful to benefit intercultural understanding and the development of intercultural communicative competence.

Iranian EFL learners answered the inquiry about their attitude toward English-speaking countries' culture positively. They asserted that culture learning is as important as language learning. The positive or unbiased view of English-speaking countries' cultures was considered beneficial to learners, and this view should be practiced in English language classrooms. Unlike some studies in Arab countries, which show the learners' negative view of the English culture (Jabeen & Shah, 2011), this study acknowledged the importance and significance of language and culture amalgamation in Iran. Although the participants did not possess an appropriate level of cultural knowledge, they regarded culture as crucial as language competence itself, for they stated that communication flaws

can be attributed to both cultural and linguistic deficiency to the same extent. Therefore, it can be concluded that, according to the results of this study, EFL learners need to boost their intercultural knowledge through group work, sharing knowledge, media, etc., for they have considered culture teaching a necessity in the language-learning domain.

Implications

According to scholars who are on behalf of withholding the introduction of the target culture from language classrooms (Kachru, 1986; Kachru & Nelson, 2009; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; McKay, 2003), culture presentation is deemed unnecessary where the target culture is present and the learners are in direct contact with the target culture. Thus, this viewpoint per se verifies the importance and necessity of presenting culture in EFL situations, as emphasized in this study in the viewpoints of language learners themselves. This study provides insightful information for language teachers, textbook publishers, and curriculum designers to foster language learners' needs in learning a language, i.e. what intercultural information and knowledge is deemed important to be learned, what strategies are more helpful, and what attitudes toward English culture should be inserted into textbooks and language classrooms. First of all, EFL learners' knowledge about ESC' cultures should grow via the strategies which are most appropriate and useful, such as group work based on cultural knowledge sharing, comparison of the two cultures, using media and movies in the classroom, and role-playing or visualizing the life of people in English-speaking countries. Most changes should be made in local textbooks, which exclude the target culture due to cultural aversions. Due to the fact that learning another culture will make learners aware of their own culture, introducing the target culture may result in the appreciation of learners' own culture. Lack of intercultural knowledge may result in a lack of confidence in language learners when they encounter native speakers and, thus, they fail to communicate effectively. As the participants declared that cultural deficiency can cause communication problems, teachers should create the opportunity for learners to realize the importance of culture in their communications with native speakers.

Since Iranian EFL learners manifested their inclination toward English culture, language practitioners do not shoulder the burden of encouraging students toward learning English-speaking countries' cultures. EFL learners, according to the result of this study, need to boost their knowledge and intercultural understanding and to see how culture can be productive in their communication for they already acknowledged the importance of cultural understanding. The survey on the strategies of acquiring intercultural communicative competence can help language teachers make culture tangible in their classrooms. However, the endeavor should not stop there, and more exploration and research should be done to distinguish the most appropriate strategies.

The researcher tried, first, to reveal the degree of Iranian EFL learners' knowledge of ESC' culture and, then, the strategies which helped them gain the current knowledge scope. Thus, language practitioners, curriculum designers, textbook publishers, and others who are engaged with the teaching of foreign languages should consider learners' needs for receiving intercultural information. Media, the internet, CDs, movies, friends and classmates, posters, and news are a few strategies which can be an aide to language teachers. The goal should not be set on native-like language competency, but as Alptekin (2002) stated, the primary goal should be developing intercultural communicative competence, which emphasizes English as an international language for communication. Both local and international cultures and the comparison between them should be covered by language textbooks and in classrooms. In this way, students can become more aware of linguistic and cultural issues, which contribute to their development of intercultural competence and, hence, create meaningful and authentic communication in the foreign language.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study revealed the importance of language and culture integration in the views of Iranian EFL learners. However, the investigation will not end in disclosing the importance of culture and intercultural understanding. Emphasizing the role of cultural knowledge, researchers should further investigate the ways of bringing culture to language classrooms. Devising the kinds of tasks appropriate to each level and group of learners is the enterprise that remains to be explored.

Further studies can be conducted on applying procedures of culture teaching in the language classrooms. They can seek other methods, such as classroom observations, think-aloud protocol, and recall protocol in order to collect diverse resources and examine the issue in depth. Class observations will help researchers to realize the actual use of language and practice of culture teaching. Moreover, further studies can focus on the definition of culture in other modes, i.e., teachers and students can be asked what cultural points are more relevant to be acquired.

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LANGUAGE TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF METACOGNITION

By Shamina Shaheen, Queen's University, Canada

Abstract

Language learners' (L2) knowledge about their own learning (also known as metacognitive knowledge) enhances with learners' acquisition of metacognitive skills and successful applications of metacognitive strategies. In these contexts, L2 teachers' knowledge about teaching is quite opposite to "abstract, decontextualized" knowledge, which results in executing "a set of discrete behaviour" (Freeman & Johnson, 1996, p. 400). Similar to the learners, as Freeman and Johnson (1996) argue, the way "teachers actually use their knowledge in classrooms is highly interpretive, socially negotiated, and continually restructured within the classrooms and schools where teachers work" (p. 400). Therefore, language teachers' knowledge of metacognition needs to be improved and applied in their instruction and classroom environment which eventually encourages and guides learners' metacognitive behaviors in L2 learning. The following sections elaborate the previous statement in three sections - 1) citing research related to second language teachers' understanding and practices of teaching of metacognition, 2) defining the role of teacher training programs in promoting metacognition, 3) and inferring ways to develop metacognitive instruction in language classrooms.

Teachers' knowledge of metacognition

According to Fusco and Fountain (1992), "metacognition involves the monitoring and control of attitudes, such as students' beliefs about themselves, the value of persistence, the nature of work, and their personal responsibility in accomplishing goal" (p. 240). Research findings (Azevedo, Greene, & Moos, 2007; Alexander, Graham, & Harris, 1998; Hattie, Bibbs, & Purdie, 1996) support that teaching metacognitive skills to students improve students' achievement as students are "able to recognize and discuss their thinking may be one of the most difficult tasks that they will have encountered" (Kolencik & Hillwig, 2012).

In Ozturk's (2017) study, the self-reported competencies for teaching metacognition of English language instructors were examined with the intervention of a professional development program. Before the intervention, 30 English language instructors' knowledge and practice of teaching metacognition were assessed through Metacognitive Awareness Inventory developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994), in which the scores ranged from 186 to 248 with a mean of 222 (on a scale of 52-260). The researcher also investigated teachers' self-reported competencies in planning a reading lesson and think-aloud protocols before the professional development. The other think-aloud task was conducted after the professional development module to examine their perceived competencies and also for change in their instructional planning. The results show a lack of knowledge or competencies of teaching metacognition in half of the participants. Further, following the professional development, only the highly metacognitive teachers demonstrated the ability to transfer and integrate their knowledge of metacognition into instructional moments.

In their effort to explore teachers' pedagogical understanding and practice of metacognition in terms of reading instruction, Wilson & Bai (2010) created a Teacher Metacognition Survey, which assessed ESL teachers' metacognitive knowledge (declarative, procedural, and conditional) and their use of instructional strategies for students to be metacognitive. The 105 graduate students who participated in this study had K-12 teaching experiences of varying degrees. One of the factors discovered through the study aligns with Clark and Graves' (2005) notion of teachers' explicit modeling of strategies for students before guided and

independent practice of those strategies. The other factor relates to the debriefing of importance of metacognitive thinking strategies to increase student's awareness of using them accordingly. The participants reported metacognition as an active process which needs appropriate application of assignments for activation, engagement, and practice for students to become metacognitive. In addition to that, the research findings indicated the importance of professional development and a teacher education program to assist teachers in improving students' metacognition.

The role of teacher education programs in metacognition

The pre-service program experience builds the foundation of teaching. Though the real teaching challenges occur when teachers start working in their own classrooms, they should possess the aptitude to transform their knowledge and skills of teaching gained in the programs to actual classroom contexts. Feiman-Nemser (2001) elaborated the idea that "a powerful curriculum for learning to teach has to be oriented around the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching and the contexts of teachers' work" (p. 1048). As Duffy (2006) pointed out in his article about how the changing need of the society requires "thoughtfully adaptive teachers" and developing them asks for "a more dynamic, sociocultural approach to the teaching of teachers" (p. 303); he suggested four shifts to promote metacognitive teaching in teacher training programs:

> *1. Teachers identifying their "moral compass", which is to practice self-regulation and decision making while dealing with emerging uncertainties, which is a common feature in classroom instruction.*
>
> *2. Through collaborative effort, teachers determine their goals, decide the process of implementation, and evaluate the process as well. In this change of "leadership role", trainers or experts act within a "learning community" or "intellectual community" providing coaching and support (p. 305).*
>
> *3. Experts in the program should be responsible to promote teachers' capabilities of transforming knowledge, rather than just teaching professional knowledge. For that, teachers need to be provided with ample opportunities to practice self-regulation while performing academic tasks. For example, in a given task, apart from learning an instructional technique, teachers need to explore how to modify the technique according to situations.*

4. Teacher-led reflection, longitudinal teaching practice, practice in situations with ground level complexities, and teacher educators' concedable direct intervention–these are the ways experts can assist teachers to become metacognitive in their practice.

In van Velzen's (2012) study on teacher educators, the results indicated that teaching the process of metacognition requires teachers teaching at a metacognitive level. The author elaborated that the process of prospective teachers' noticing the importance of acquiring metacognitive knowledge correlates with teacher educators emphasizing on the role of the cognitive process in learning, rather than on task performance. Therefore, teacher education programs need to provide opportunities to the teacher educators and their students to gain this holistic view of learning, to teach not just the core matter but supplemental instructions with metacognitive strategies.

Metacognitive instruction

Goh and Taib (2006) documented learners' increased knowledge of metacognition and training of practicing relevant strategies through the exercise of metacognitive instruction. Utilizing proper 'tools', teachers are able to integrate metacognitive instruction in their lessons through metacognitive activities and making students aware of the activities (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006).

Despite teachers' willingness to practice metacognitive instruction, factors such as individual student conditions might impede achievement of lesson objectives. Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, and Afflerbach (2006) referred to one of these states as availability deficiency which is a student's lack of sufficient metacognitive skills and knowledge. Whereas, in production deficiency, students fail to utilize their metacognitive skills and knowledge "due to task difficulty, test anxiety, lack of motivation, or their inability to see the appropriateness of metacognition in a particular situation" (p. 10). Therefore, Veenman's (1998) principles of WWW&H rule (What to do, When, Why, and How) scaffolds around the fundamental principles of successful metacognitive instruction stated by the authors as: a) embedding metacognitive instruction in the content matter to ensure connectivity, b) informing learners about the usefulness of metacognitive activities to make them exert the initial extra effort, and c) prolonged training to

guarantee the smooth and maintained application of metacognitive activity (p. 9).

To cultivate metacognitive awareness in teaching practices, Scharff and Draeger (2015) emphasized that metacognitive instruction not only be a mere reflection of one's teaching but a process which "continuously takes the pulse of what's going on" (p. 4). The ability to articulate and work towards goals using effective strategies along their way of teaching are the essence of metacognitive instruction and of the instructors. The authors offered four building blocks to encourage instructors about the "explicit, ongoing and intentional self-regulation of instructional choices" in metacognitive instruction (p. 5):

> *1. Teachers need to be aware of the general learning process. Not all learning related strategies are effective; thus, teachers should educate themselves by studying relevant literatures to get comprehensive understanding about how learning works.*
>
> *2. Teachers should get familiar with their students' characteristics, learning context, and goals. This essential information helps teachers to make specific choices and address the necessary changes.*
>
> *3. Even though a preferred method proves to be successful and labeled 'standard' in the field, teachers need to be strategic in their choice of using that specific method to particular skills related to current context and learners.*
>
> *4. Teachers should comprehend students' feedback and adjust their strategies if students' desired outcomes are not achieved. They need to "check in" on students' progress and be prepared to employ alternate strategies.*

The four general ways to increase metacognition in learners, as Schraw (1998) suggested are: "promoting general awareness of the importance of metacognition, improving knowledge of cognition, improving regulation of cognition, and fostering environments that promote metacognitive awareness" (p. 118). The 'flexible' and 'indispensable' nature of metacognition encompasses multiple domains of knowledge regardless of the dissimilarities between the areas of knowledge. This is where metacognition differs from domain-specific cognitive skills; Pintrich (2002) added "on the knowledge dimension; metacognitive knowledge categories refer only to knowledge of cognitive strategies, not the actual use of those strategies" (p. 223). The successful infusion of teachers' well-grounded metacognitive knowledge into their substantial knowledge of the subject to teach, therefore, delineates their effort for teaching metacognition in language classrooms.

Conclusion

A metacognitive person demonstrates an awareness and regulation of one's mental processes (Griffith & Ruan, 2005) and for language learners, this awareness and regulation have to be demonstrated in their language learning process for effective outcomes. Teachers need to support and provide models to learners as they progress towards growing skills of using metacognitive strategies. According to Zimmerman (2013), learners, during efforts at getting better, improve their "accuracy and motivation if a model provides them with guidance, feedback, and social reinforcement" (p. 140). Teachers in the classrooms, hence, should be well equipped to emerge as that model by increasing their metacognitive knowledge, which is achievable through enriched metacognitive experiences.

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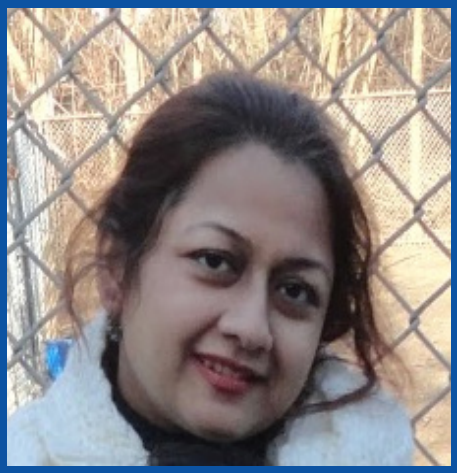

NARRATIVES: PORTRAYING STUDENTS' IDENTITY AS WRITERS

By Fredy Orlando Salamanca González, Colombia

Abstract

The objective of this research study was to analyze B.A. students' writers' identity based on their narratives. The theory for this research was based on the poststructuralist perspective of identity and on theoretical concepts for personal narratives. For the methodology, the Case Study approach was taken into account. Students argued that a writer creates stories and contexts. Hence, students see themselves as apprentices that like to write, but not as writers. For the participants, there is a difference between a teacher that writes and a writer, and also none of the participants mentioned academic texts as writing. For them, writing is related to tales, poetry, and fiction.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue el de analizar la identidad como escritores de estudiantes de licenciatura en idiomas con base en sus narrativas. Esta investigación tuvo como soporte teórico la perspectiva posestructuralista de identidad y teoría en relación con narrativas personales. En la metodología se tuvo en cuenta el enfoque de Estudio de Caso. Los participantes afirman que un escritor crea historias y contextos. Los estudiantes se ven como aprendices que les gusta escribir pero, no como escritores. Para los participantes existe una diferencia entre un profesor que escribe y un escritor. Ninguno de los participantes mencionó los textos académicos como escritura, para ellos la escritura se relaciona con cuentos, poemas o ficción.

Introduction

There is a strong connection between identity and language learning. Languages carry within ideologies and cultural and social issues that affect students' personality. From the poststructuralist dimension of identity, a person can perform multiple identities depending on the context in which they are immersed. Following the poststructuralist approach of identity, students studying languages are constantly displaying numerous identities. In a Languages B.A. program in a public university in Colombia, students are exposed to their classmates' identity, to their teacher's identity, and to the social context. In that sense, students' identities change like their ways of thinking. Besides, writing as a reflective process exhibits students' insights and identities that can be insinuated from their texts. Writing is a resource that can help to research students' identities in a learning environment.

The aim of this research study is to answer two questions: What do narratives reveal about students' identities as writers? And, how do students define writing according to their personal experience? During academic life, the participants of this research study were required to write a variety of texts: essays, reflective logs, and sometimes stories. Occasionally, these students were free to decide what to write. They showed reluctance to write academic texts, and thus, their papers mainly displayed personal events. That kind of written production was the motivation to carry out this research project. The inquiry to begin this study was related to why students wrote personal texts rather than academic papers, and also what students thought about themselves as writers.

For analyzing students' identity as writers, this research study was developed. The following sections will contain information about the problem that illustrates the origin of this study, and also, theoretical content about the poststructuralist perspective of identity proposed by Norton (1997) and theoretical aspects about personal narratives proposed by Pavlenko (2008). Furthermore, the subsequent sections relate to the research methodology that was applied, also to the findings, conclusions and the possible paths to follow for future research on identity and the writing field.

Literature Review

Identity

Identity is a topic that has many connotations. According to Duff (2012), identity traditionally "was understood in terms of one's connection or identification with a particular social group, the emotional ties one has with that group, and the meanings that connection has for an individual" (p.12). Some people might feel that they are the same person wherever they are, but certainly each person has as many identities as contexts where they perform. The poststructuralist perspective implies that identity is socially constructed and changes overtime. According to Norton (1997), the term identity refers to "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (p. 410). From this perspective, a person is conditioned by the context to perform in a specific way in different settings impersonating multiple identities based on personal experiences and projecting a desirable identity towards the future.

Identity has to do with belonging to groups. When a person is accepted in a social group, they feel motivated and identified; that identification can turn into power or respect. Likewise, identity relates to the desire of people for belonging to a group; Norton (1997) claims there is a "desire for recognition, for affiliation and the desire for security and safety" (p. 410). People feel secure when they are in contact with whom they feel identified. Similarly, people might change their common behavior or way of thinking depending on the group that they belong. Identity works in a double way, such that an individual can affect the identity of a group, and a group can demand a specific identity from an individual.

Another dimension for identity is related to the concept of social identity. People are confined to living among others. Consequently, identities are molded according to social groups, their behavior, their ideologies, or their beliefs. Deaux (2001) proposes that social identification is developed while a person interacts with others. For the case of this research study, a languages student can display many identities. For example, a student can identify themselves as learner, tutor, teacher, reader, writer, presenter, etc. The previous identities are

socially constructed based on the academic context. Because society influences people, an individual student's identity changes over time alike their perceptions about others' identities.

As stated previously, people display different identities depending on the setting in which they are. Students are perceived as such while they are in academia, but at the same time, they are fathers, sisters, husbands, employees, workers, etc. Díaz (2013), argues that a pre-service teacher's identity is influenced by means of the day-to-day interactions that languages students experience in educational institutions. Each setting requires a specific identity in order to interact, and consequently, the same person is perceived differently by others. In the present research study, the main concern was to analyze students' identity as writers. From a personal point of view, this identity is built from their experience during their undergraduate program, from the interaction with teachers, and from the texts they read and wrote. In addition, this identity is also related to their personal lives and to the ideas and concepts they have been exposed to during their educational lives.

Commonly, people are affected by their desires or projections towards who they would like to be or how they would like to be perceived by others. In that sense, the identity as writers can be attached towards the authors that students have read or the kind of texts that they prefer. As a result, from what students like to read, it can be inferred what they would write. Pavlenko & Blackledge (2003) mentioned that identity "is a dialogic phenomenon, constantly open to construction and reevaluation within and through communicative interaction" (p. 1). With languages students, identity can be linked to their role as learners and how that experience is reflected in their lives.

For the present research study, identity is considered as an experiential process. People develop their identities according to the contexts in which they are immersed or according to the people with whom they interact. Languages students develop their identities in relation to their subjects, their affiliation to teachers, their preferences in terms of the topics studied, and for this specific case, they construct their identities in relation to the texts they have read, the texts they have written, or their own concepts for reading and writing. In the

following sections, the relationship that researchers have established between writing and identity will be illustrated.

Narratives

Every person's life is a story; every person lives incidents that are worthy of being heard. Narratives are essentially life experiences that can be shared orally or in writing. Narratives can be considered discourses, and consequently, carry an identity within. Any word or text involves conveying intentions, meanings, and points of view. In that sense, Castañeda (2008) implies that "discourses comprise ways of understanding the world, talking about it and – especially but not limited to – 'becoming and/or being' within it" (p. 114). Discourses, alike identity, mean the presence of a person in relation to specific contexts. The participants of this research study, demonstrated by means of their narratives, that they were part of academia, but also, that they did not think they were part of the writers' world.

As mentioned previously narratives and discourses can be similar. Pavlenko (2008), mentions that narratives are "all types of discourse in which event structured material is shared with readers or listeners, including fictional stories, personal narratives, accounts and recounts of events (real or imagined)" (p. 311). An interesting aspect that narratives imply is inquiry. Inquiries are the beginning of narratives. Questions allow the writer to reflect upon the answer, and because narratives are based on personal issues, honesty emerges on the paper. A narrator writes real life experiences and displays their own feelings. Narratives as a collection data instrument provide information from the perspective of the participants. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), as quoted by Rivas (2013), narratives "provide researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (p. 189). Narratives, as stories, help to research from the inner perspectives of the participants. Thus, the most appropriate way to establish students' writers' identities is by asking them to narrate how they see themselves as writers.

When writing narratives, students relate to meaningful aspects of their lives. People make sense of their lives by means of their experience. Bolívar (2002) cited by Rodríguez (2011) declared that "narratives are related to people's narrations about their life stories, lived experiences, biography, and important episodes of their lives. From narratives, feelings, thoughts, motivations, desires, purposes emerge to make sense to these human affairs" (p. 40). The participants of this research study make sense of their role as writers the writing experience that they have.

Narratives can be classified into two categories: fictional narratives and personal narratives. Fictional narratives are stories about unreal events using prompts, pictures, or videos. Pavlenko (2008) states that personal narratives "can be elicited in experimental settings through key words, interview questions, or requests to tell particular types of stories, such as earliest memories, stories about holidays or car accidents, or stories about times when the speakers felt a particular emotion" (p. 318). The narratives implemented in this research study were personal narratives. Because the aim of this study was to reveal students' identities as writers, the personal narratives provided a rich amount of data. Personal narratives accounted for experiences, memories, and sensations. For writing the narratives, students were inquired about their writing background and their affiliation towards those texts. Also, they wrote about the influence they had from other people to write, their motivations to write, and the kinds of texts they wrote. Finally, and more importantly, they wrote about how they saw themselves as writers. All the previous narratives were written according to the participants' personal experiences.

Narratives as a reflective exercise make people analyze and make sense of their lives and roles in a society. The main issue to study in narratives is people's experiences and how they create meaning from those experiences. Bruner (1990), as cited by Miyahara (2010) indicates that "in the experience – centered approach, narratives are the means of human sense-making: human beings create meaning from their experiences both individually and socially" (p. 6). Narratives are separated pieces of experiences. They reveal the insights of a person in relation to an issue that was lived in a specific moment in life. Those pieces of writing, when

connected, provide a full narration that can be understood as a unit. Writing narratives is not just writing about oneself, but also, how people provide meaning to the events narrated.

Methodology

This research study is rooted in qualitative research and on the case study approach. According to Gerring (2004), a case study is a study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of units. The narratives written by eighth semester students are the units to be analyzed. After analyzing each unit, the research established common characteristics among all texts. Specifically, this research study was based on the interpretive case study approach.

The research was carried out at a public university in Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia with students in the Modern Languages Spanish – English B.A. program. The participants are currently studying their eighth semester. They were between 20 and 30 years-old. They were six people, four men and two women. These students were selected because they were finishing their undergraduate studies. These students have studied over 80% of the syllabus of their undergraduate program; therefore, they have already been required to write different texts about many topics. That knowledge and their insights about being a writer are meaningful to develop this research.

To collect data, three instruments were applied. The triangulation of the data was done by means of narratives, interviews, and a focus group session. The narratives were written in English in order to accomplish the requirement of the English Literature course, which is to practice writing in the target language. The interview and the focus group sessions were applied in the mother language of the participants to avoid any kind of distortion in the data and to gain more spontaneity in the answers given by them.

Findings

The findings of this research determined two aspects: the students' identities as writers and their definition of writing. For characterizing students' identities as writers, it is necessary to know the concept they have for writer. In that sense, the

participants do not think that they can be considered writers. They mentioned that they prefer to keep their texts in secret because writers publish their texts and are criticized. Another aspect is that they feel comfortable writing about their experiences, as the following samples illustrates:

> *I as a writer? Mmm! I don't think of me as a writer, I never have done it. I think that I wouldn't be a "good" writer. In fact, if I write, I think that I will never show my writing to someone else.*
>
> *How do you see yourself as a writer? I cannot answer this question because I do not know how will I am in the future in terms of writing something, in fact I have some doubts in relation with it; to be a writer it requires a lot of life experiences and own style, but I think it will be hard to achieve.*

The participants of this research demonstrated that writing is creating narrations according to life experiences. In that sense, when they imply that a writer is a creator of stories, they are expressing the freedom to convey the ideas that they want and how they want:

> *I prefer to write personally, I mean to write about experiences, troubles, love, sadness and things like these. I have written a lot of papers which are about feelings and thing that I think when I can get asleep, and I realized that it is a good chance to produce writing.*

The previous student validates the idea that he prefers to write about his life. Besides, when this student mentions the fact of producing writing, he means feelings that disturb him and that do not allow him to sleep can be an advantage to write and to discharge the mind and the body, to be distressed and rested. The preference for informal writing is also displayed in the following sample:

> *For sure, I prefer to write informal papers because I feel free. Informal is the way I can say what I feel, what I dream, what I think, and nobody has to support the theory about what I am.*

The participants of this research study prefer to write freely. They create stories, build context, and imagine situations. Free writing allows them to evade the constraints that academic writing has. Their stories do not need corrections, there are no grades, there is no one to tell them if their texts are well written or not. That freedom is what they are looking for in their texts. That is the free writing they expect, writing without any imposition or rule—writing because they want to and not because they have to. Maybe this conflict is what makes them think that they are not writers.

> *I say that I do not consider myself a writer because when I write I do it for myself, I never write for someone else, actually I feel embarrassed showing my texts to someone, I mean what is it to be a writer? It is to show to the public my texts, that is what I think.*

> *I see myself as a dreamer. I'm not that good in "fantastic" literature, but I love the stories in which I can connect the real world with my dreams. I think that I could be a good writer if I wanted.*

According to the samples, a writer composes texts based on fantastic and fictional contexts. Also, in the previous excerpt, the participant does not assert that he is a writer; he argues that if he would like, he could be a great writer, but his idea of being a writer is attached to literature and fiction. Similarly, all the participants do not want to be attached to rules or parameters.

> *When you need to write, you just write freely, and not because you have to answer to a question or someone tells you: "write about this…" no, you write because you want to do it and need to do it.*

On the other hand, students proposed their definition for writing. In the previous paragraphs, the concept of writer was already established and the reasons why the participants did not consider themselves as writers. Likewise, for the participants, the definition of writing is determined by their reading preferences. In general, the participants of the present research study agreed that writing is related to their life experiences and feelings. For the participants, it is relevant, meaningful, and helpful to discharge their feelings on a piece of paper. Students experience writing as a way to free their minds and body from negative situations, for example:

> *I write to feel free, writing is for releasing all the pain and suffering that is inside me, it is like a relieve.*

> *Most of the time when I try to write is because I feel the necessity to express my feeling in that moment, I think that this is a good exercise to alleviate my heart and my thoughts and it helps to me to hide those bad events.*

The participants stated that they like to write, but their writing is not subjected to parameters, rules, or grades. For the participants, writing is a process to release stress, anger, or sadness; that is their motivation to write. Also, for them, writing is freedom and isolation. They mentioned that writing was a way to escape from problems and negative feelings, as the following excerpt illustrates:

> *For me writing is like scaping where I can write whatever I want and eventually those texts are for me and if I want to tell something to someone, I tell it to myself.*

Writing for the participants of this research is closely related to the same content that they read. They feel attracted to literature, and consequently, their thoughts about writing are linked to creation and personal feelings. Finally, for students, writing is more an experiential and sensory activity than a disciplined and organized work. Commonly, students are asked to write and actually do it, but they are not willing to correct or accept changes. They prefer to leave their texts the way they are. Maybe they believe that a writer has never corrected a text.

Conclusions

One of the conclusions extracted from this research study is that students do not consider themselves as writers. They believe that for being a writer it is necessary to read, and to believe in what they write. Also, for students, a writer creates stories, plots, and sceneries; students like to read literature and that type of reading has permeated their writing, despite they declared that when they write, they do not see themselves as writers.

Another conclusion is related to the definition that students have for writing. For the participants of this research study, writing means to narrate personal events. Writing allows students to analyze and reflect upon situations that happen daily. Students use writing to liberate themselves from negative feelings.

Another contribution that this research can provide is that the participants preferred to write without following any kind of parameters. They argued that writing should not be tied to structures, rules, or topics. Writing should be carried out whenever students would like to and about any topic they would like. For them, writing should not be imposed by means of topics, extension, or rules (such as APA). Thus, these pre-service teachers argued that when they teach writing, they direct their students towards writing exercises similar to the ones they have been doing. Students meant to teach writing by means of narrating stories or personal events.

From the teaching perspective, this research study provided two conclusions. One of them is related to the rapport between teacher and students. Identity is fixed to writing. Narratives reveal who the students are. Consequently, it is impossible not to feel affinity towards apprentices. Narratives are intimate, and teachers must be able to recognize that the points of view or critics must

be respected. In the narratives, students revealed their ideas, arguments, and desires, and this information was meaningful for the teacher. When the teacher knows their students, they can redesign classes and direct knowledge towards topics interesting to both the teacher and the students.

Another point that can be mentioned from the teaching perspective is that it is important to provide students with chances to explore their writing. Academic writing is included in the programs of the subjects of any languages program. Next to academic writing, teachers can incorporate other exercises, such as diaries, journals, or narratives. Also, it could be worth analyzing the inclusion of personal writing from basic language levels and in higher levels where the teacher can move towards academic writing. With personal writing, it is possible to teach grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary implicitly. Finally, identification is a key issue in writing. When students feel that the texts reflect themselves, they feel proud and comfortable with their product.

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CLIL AS A MEANINGFUL PATHWAY TO REDEFINE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This article gives account of the pedagogical interplay that CLIL could have as an educational approach within a pre-selected undergraduate group of International Business students. It presents a proposal that considers the importance of providing learners with an embedded, functional and curricular model, in which languages and content interrelate simultaneously. In the same line of thought, it suggests a set of materials and resources which could be applied according to particular educational settings, and puts forward a five-step elemental procedure to follow, along with guidelines for teachers to implement CLIL within their university classes.

Introduction

Colombian traditional education models have been immersed within our society for many decades up to now. Features such as memory, severity, and even low sympathy, have been made part of many students' class routines who have been perceived by their "authorities" as non-critical subdued learners. Ochoa (2005) states that the traditional model focuses on the faculties of the soul as: understanding, memory, and will. The basic learning method is the academicism-verbalism characterized by classes under regimes of discipline to learners who are passive receptors. This indicates that teachers could be considered as the ultimate knowledge holders.

Snow, Met, and Genesee (as cited in Lyster, 2007) stated that "whereas language development and cognitive development go hand-in-hand for young children, traditional methods tend to separate language development from general cognitive development" (p. 1). To clarify, traditional methods tend to disregard any practical content from enhancing cognitive processes.

At present, CLIL has been applied in various educational settings, and it is considered an innovative strategy to teach content in a language that differs from the students' own, bearing in mind the present alignment between traditional methods and its low-impact contribution to students' academic achievements; an approach emerged, so that it can be applied as a medium for learning within a particular academic field, while language and cognitive development work together in favor of the learners' needs.

Theoretical overview

Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) describe CLIL as "an educational approach in which various language-supportive methodologies are used which lead to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content" (p. 3). Based on the previous assertion, this paper aims to capture the essentials of its features so as to incorporate practical problem-solving business scenarios where students could interact and create context-driven instruction in tandem with language skills development.

Fernández (2009) carried out a proposal at Universidad Nacional del Litoral, which correlated language teaching with and through content teaching. He found CLIL-oriented EFL settings suitable and convenient, since he came to the realization that there is no problem to define what language to teach, but considered principles, such as avoiding redundancy, that is to say, not teaching students what they have already learnt in their own language. Teachers ought to omit banality; in other words, they should not test students on topics they have already been tested; to put it simply, they should not oversimplify content issues.

Hence, he noticed that it was more meaningful to allow learners to use, negotiate, and remodel subject-matter meaning rather than merely introduce new, but isolated, content from distinct academic environments.

Likewise, Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) assert that the 4 C's framework (Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture) consolidate learning and language learning. Therefore, within the higher education context, CLIL may serve as a flexible and sustainable approach since it encompasses global goals, cultural aspects, and a variety of subject content, along with communicative and cognitive features which could be expanded depending on the educational community needs and standards.

Context

Within higher education, it is fundamental to consider the implementation of a more holistic educational approach in order to meet further academic needs regarding content and languages. In a constant, globalized world, knowledge should be based on experimentation along with a medium that shapes not only what is being learned, but how it is being conveyed.

Therefore, this proposal intends to be carried out at tertiary education level, as it would permit students to become critical thinkers by means of pre-selected academic settings related to their own fields of study. Thus, it is expected that they are capable of mastering diverse types of contents, considering several types of communication (what to learn and how to learn) and gaining meaningful learning outcomes along with a foreign language experience.

In higher education worldwide, it is intended to implement subjects in foreign languages as part of the universities' language policies. Therefore, CLIL could be a suitable approach initially applied with International Business students as a manner of instruction in which both language and content could be merged. CLIL encourages students to become more active participants through the development of their capacity to attain the required knowledge and the necessary skills to take part in authentic, everyday scenarios.

Implementation of a CLIL model in higher education

When it comes to introducing a new proposal, it is paramount to reflect on the importance of providing students with a functional and meaningful curricular

subject matter. Thereby, learners can get acquainted with the content areas, so they can develop specific competences in the regular language of instruction. Delhaxhe et al. (2006) claim that CLIL is conceived under a twofold objective, as a bridge to ensure that students acquire knowledge of certain areas and to strengthen competences in a language other than the one of instruction.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned targets, it is likely to consider that the International Business program could incorporate a merged curricular model that provides a variety of pedagogical reasons for introducing CLIL. According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), the 4 C's model "can only be implemented in very specific types of higher-education institutions (for example, business and management faculties where students attend courses with a reasonable level of proficiency in the target languages)" (p. 25). By introducing this approach, students should be able to become conversant with this model, as they would master its content progressively as well as the ability to acquire multiple skills in more than one language before complete immersion in any working environment.

Additionally, this model would be appropriate initially for the International Business students, since this would contextualize learners in favour of a more globalized, functional, authentic, curriculum-based learning, in order to develop confidence and intercultural knowledge within real life scenarios. Learners need to be exposed to different situations in which they are challenged and prompted to analyze and understand aspects of social and economic relevance.

This proposal aims to foster and empower students' business skills by introducing and persuading potential projects to markets under international standards and by expressing their thoughts in an approachable yet informative manner, so that both, the target audience and the presenter, can boost active communication and analyze worldwide marketing strategies to supply large-scale solutions. In this sense, the viability of the proposal could progressively measure obtained outcomes by means of ongoing feedback and evaluation.

Suggested materials and resources

Specific materials and resources are necessary to be implemented according to the context and teachers' experiences. Additionally, it is required to enrich and

enhance key elements teachers use (e.g., syllabus, scope and sequence, and lesson plans) in order to impact, adapt the contexts, and apply the acquired knowledge by means of the following stages:

1. Conduct a survey aimed at identifying learners and teachers' preferred topics and how these could be tackled throughout the semester.

2. Get conversant with the 4 C's (Cognition, Culture, Content and Communication) along with setting specific aims, criteria for assessment, as well as illustrating the importance of maintaining the relevance of language and content.

3. Implement the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) by means of tasks that empower affective and cognitive factors along the learning processes.

4. Design meaningful settings that benefit language learning, oriented to the development of critical competences and communicative and professional contexts.

5. Implement midterm tests/surveys in order to monitor the ongoing process.

CLIL characterization and implementation

Implementing a CLIL module requires time, observation, constant supervision, compromise and commitment from all participants. Table 1, outlines in general terms, what is intended with a straightforward CLIL proposal; it provides a basic description of the steps to follow, from implementation to suggestions.[1]

Closing remarks

This proposal is intended to support foreign language learning policies at a tertiary education level, pinpointing the need for non-English speakers to be proficient in a foreign language. Hence, the aforementioned CLIL proposal refines and strengthens specific academic fields implicit in the curriculum to benefit the stakeholders and attain an overall better performance. CLIL is prone to being applied at any higher educational setting, as it affords a holistic pedagogical view regarding 21st century's learners' needs, as languages cannot be fragmented from the knowledge itself, but devoted by means of a thorough cultural fusion. This approach could be adapted to any curriculum, as it is flexible and open to the ongoing revisions that could emerge throughout contemporary learning processes.

1 Refer to *Table 1. CLIL proposal*

Table 1. CLIL proposal

Steps	Activity	Type of Task	Expected Outcomes	Tips/Suggestions
1. Train yourself	Become acquainted with the CLIL principles, as well as with the characteristics that outline its virtues.	Review the British Council webpage to have a grasp on CLIL:	Participants are expected to understand the fundamentals of CLIL and how to incorporate its basic principles (the 4 C's) within classes.	Create a mindmap that displays at least two educational-linguistic perspectives. For example: *How do publicity messages impact society?* Intertwine the use of language with a given situation to solve.
2. Get conversant with the target groups	Along with the students, brainstorm a list of topics to work on.	It is suggested to tackle Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) for linguistic purposes and Content-Based Instruction (CBI) for subject matter purposes.	Teachers design a CLIL lesson plan proposal considering general features, such as: target groups, time, topics, TBLT, and CBI approaches in order to come up with an embedded perspective, and the expected outcomes where language and content have the same level of importance.	Apart from the topics that emerged, consider a relevant key language gap in which learners prove interest. For example: *What vocabulary would you use to design a creative advertising campaign?*
3. Material design	Based on the selected topics, teacher(s) start(s) working on new materials, such as worksheets, forums, oral presentations, public exhibitions, etc.	Self-designed materials are key. Take into account a scenario where students feel empowered and comfortable.	Students develop the suggested activities that require them to analyze, create, evaluate, and apply meaningful learning.	Create tasks that permit students to breakdown, design, and give reason for situational settings they are fond of exploring. *Being mistaken is a step forward towards the knowledge threshold.*
4. Implement-ing material	Apply the designed material, taking into account the balanced effectiveness between language and content.	Consider the target population as to implement critical thinking skills by reasoning diverse ideas.	The designed material is expected to foster students' critical thinking skills and apply gained knowledge on real life scenarios (through the use of the 4 C's.)	Tasks such as: *Analyze the following advertising campaigns. What would you implement to make them more commercially efficient within a more globalized and inclusive world?*
5. Assessing CLIL imple-mentation	Design a rubric where stakeholders record the most important features either to reinforce or continue using it.	Conduct an individual survey in which stakeholders speak their minds on the impact the sessions had on their overall academic performance.	Feedback concerning the advantages and disadvantages of implementing the CLIL modules. Co-evaluation is essential to strengthen the implemented approach.	Discuss and analyze the rubric results with the academic community. Focus on: *Benefits, aspects to enhance, and aspects to change.*

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